DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 457 137 SP 040 214

AUTHOR	Pitton, Debra Eckerman
TITLE	Mentoring Novice Teachers: Fostering a Dialogue Process.
ISBN	ISBN-1-57517-270-4
PUB DATE	2000-00-00
NOTE	158p.
AVAILABLE FROM	SkyLight Professional Development, 2626 South Clearbrook Drive, Arlington Heights, IL 60005-5310 (Item #1937, $24.95). Tel: 847-290-6600; Tel: 800-348-4474 (Toll Free); e-mail: info@skylightedu.com; Web site: http://www.skylightedu.com.
PUB TYPE	Books (010) -- Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Beginning Teacher Induction; *Beginning Teachers; Communication Skills; Dialogs (Language); Elementary Secondary Education; Faculty Development; Interpersonal Communication; *Interpersonal Competence; *Mentors; Role Playing

ABSTRACT

This book provides educators who mentor novice teachers an opportunity to increase their awareness of the skills that are needed to mentor. Through the use of specific examples and role plays, teachers can learn how to work effectively with inexperienced teachers. The book helps mentors develop ways to interact positively with novice teachers and support beginning teachers as they move through initial teaching experiences. Throughout the book, readers are asked to dialogue with colleagues who are also mentors or involved in the mentoring relationship about their experiences and their understanding of the mentoring role. A pre-program questionnaire provides mentors with a snapshot of their knowledge as they begin reading the book. Mentors can use the results of the questionnaire to individualize the mentoring process to best meet their needs. After completing the book, mentors can use a follow-up questionnaire to identify growth. The book's six chapters are: (1) "Defining the Mentoring Relationship"; (2) "The Heart of Mentoring: Trust and Open Communication"; (3) "Addressing the Needs of the Mentee"; (4) "The Mentor's Lens"; (5) "Data-Gathering Techniques and Tools"; and (6) "Evaluation." The appendixes provide mentoring projects and role plays. (Contains 78 references.) (SM)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 457 137

MENTORING NOVICE TEACHERS

Fostering a Dialogue Process

DEBRA ECKERMAN PITTON

SP 040 214

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
K. Huseth
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2

2A

Mentoring Novice Teachers

Fostering a Dialogue Process

Debra Eckerman Pitton

Arlington Heights, Illinois

Mentoring Novice Teachers: Fostering a Dialogue Process

Published by SkyLight Professional Development
2626 S. Clearbrook Drive, Arlington Heights, IL 60005-5310
Phone 800-348-4474, 847-290-6600
fax 847-290-6609
info@skylightedu.com
http://www.skylightedu.com

Director, Product Development: Donna Nygren
Acquisitions Editor: Sue Schumer
Project Coordinators: Barb Lightner, Amy Kinsman
Editor: Jodi Keller
Cover Designer: David Stockman
Book Designer: Bruce Leckie
Proofreader: Heidi Ray
Indexer: Schroeder Indexing
Production Supervisor: Bob Crump

© 2000 SkyLight Training and Publishing Inc.
All rights reserved.
Printed in the United States of America.

ISBN 1-57517-270-4
LCCCN: 00-130543

2624V
Item number 1937

Z Y X W V U T S R Q P O N M L K J I H G F E D C B
06 05 04 03 02 01 00 15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

This book is dedicated to my husband, Jon, and my children, Angela, Matthew, and Laura, who inspire me and who also put up with all the time I spend writing.

Contents

Acknowledgments / vii
Introduction / 1

CHAPTER 1: Defining the Mentoring Relationship / 5
A Personal Vision of Teaching / 5
Roles in Mentorships / 9

CHAPTER 2: The Heart of Mentoring: Trust and Open Communication / 21
Building Trust / 21
Open Communication / 25

CHAPTER 3: Addressing the Needs of the Mentee / 37
Dealing with Diverse Needs / 38

CHAPTER 4: The Mentor's Lens / 69
Organizing Teaching and Learning Through a Lens / 69

CHAPTER 5: Data-Gathering Techniques and Tools / 95
Scripting / 96

CHAPTER 6: Evaluation / 117
Program Evaluation / 118
Evaluation for Personal Growth / 124
Letters of Recommendation / 128

APPENDIX A: Mentoring Projects / 137
Project: Everything You Ever Needed to Know to Begin Teaching in This School / 137
Project: Action Plan / 138
Project: Sharing Your Expertise / 139
Project: Reflections / 139

APPENDIX B: Role-Plays / 140
Scenario 1: Part A / 140
Scenario 1: Part B / 140
Scenario 2: Part A / 141
Scenario 2: Part B / 141
Scenario 3: Part A / 141
Scenario 3: Part B / 141
Scenario 4: Part A / 141
Scenario 4: Part B / 142

References / 143
Index / 149

Acknowledgments

Having survived my first year of teaching high school with the help of several elementary teachers who filled the teachers' workroom with the support, ideas, friendship, and food that was so desperately needed, I know the value of mentoring. Although they were unknowing mentors at the time, these teachers from the Elkader, Iowa, school district who listened to my complaints and offered me encouragement are my primary models for effective mentoring. At the time, the high school teachers' lounge was too smoke-filled for my taste, so I frequented the closer elementary wing of our school's joint facilities. When I am conducting workshops for mentors or working with future teachers, I am sometimes asked about my first year of teaching, and Arlene Kuehl and Susan Kuehl's names top the list of that supportive group of teachers and staff.

In addition, there have been other mentors who impacted my development as an educator as I moved through different stages of learning about teaching. Collectively, these mentors have provided examples of various styles of mentoring—all unique and all effective. Experiencing these various mentoring styles has contributed to my understanding of the importance of effective mentoring and heightened my desire to help others serve as effective mentors. I believe that the lives of students are greatly enhanced when their teachers feel supported and have someone to help them continue to learn.

My mentors include the following individuals:

Vince Williams, my first mentor, who served as my cooperating teacher at Hempstead High School in Dubuque, Iowa. Vince modeled for me a powerful work ethic and a dedication to students that I have tried to emulate. He also gave me the freedom and support to develop my own teaching style.

Harriet Naden, an English teacher from Maine Township High School in Des Plaines, Illinois, who took me to my first educational conference—a powerful learning experience that I did not know existed until then.

Bob Seei, former principal at Wilson Middle School in Plano, Texas, who mentored me in the art of conflict resolution. When I banged on his office door, seething from some injustice I felt had been perpetrated on a student or a fellow teacher, he always told me that he would gather the facts and get back to me. I wanted immediate answers, but his style modeled for me the effectiveness of waiting to make a decision until the whole picture was in sight. His answers and decisions were usually on target, even if I had to wait to get them!

Doug Warring, Sally Hunter, and Trudi Taylor from the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota, who mentored me during my first experience in higher education and continues to inspire me when we confer about issues. Their caring response to my needs as a first-year faculty member identified for me the necessity of mentoring for all beginning teachers, no matter what level.

Bob Monson, former superintendent of District 197 in West St. Paul, Minnesota, who was the ultimate mentor. His belief in my abilities and his encouragement gave me the strength to do a job I was not sure I could handle. His support and expertise enabled me to learn more about myself, curriculum development, educational communities, and change than I had ever imagined.

Finally, Mike Miller, professor of education at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota, who serves as my current mentor. His inclusive style allows the department and the college to participate in decisions and learn from our collaborative work. In addition, he supports my decisions and offers resources and feedback to enhance my ongoing learning.

The cumulative effect of these mentoring experiences is reflected in my teaching and work style. I recognize and appreciate the challenges mentors face each day. My goal is to provide learning experiences for future mentors so they can provide beginning teachers with the support and encouragement they need to best meet the needs of their students.

Introduction

Teaching is one of the few professions that requires newly trained individuals to be given immediate and full responsibility for their work by making teachers accountable for the learning that occurs (or does not occur) in their classrooms. Practicing teaching in the abstract, without students, does not provide novice teachers with the context they need to develop and hone their skills. Therefore, before being licensed as teachers, new teachers must demonstrate their competence in the classroom through their work as student teachers. In addition, many states are enacting probationary status for first-year teachers to ensure that beginning teachers continue to learn and grow as they interact with students and the school community. Thus, the student teaching experience and the first year of teaching are critical times for supporting a new teacher's learning. However, individuals who assume the task of supporting developing educators through the role of mentor are often given little direction or guidance themselves. This book is designed to enhance the mentoring skills of those taking on the role of mentor by reflecting on the process of guiding novice teachers.

What Is a Mentor?

The word *mentor* pops up in many conversations today. Famous athletes may speak of their coaches as mentors. Business leaders talk about mentoring in terms of guiding a newly hired person in the operations of

the company. High schools and colleges often place students in apprenticeship positions with a mentor, giving students opportunities to work with others who are doing the job they hope to have someday. All of these descriptions of a mentor are accurate, and they all are based on a trusting relationship between two people.

This type of relationship can greatly benefit new teachers. Many newly hired teachers often find themselves overwhelmed by the demands of a new job and isolated in a classroom with little time to talk to their colleagues. They may wonder if they are doing things "the right way" and they may feel frustrated when lessons and assignments do not work out as they had planned. Novice teachers often struggle as they work to apply their knowledge in the ever-changing world of their classroom, and many leave the teaching profession after their first year, frustrated and discouraged. The multiple tasks of adjusting to a new environment, dealing with the varying needs of their students, and developing their own confidence while preparing for daily lessons and schoolwide expectations can overwhelm beginning teachers. Gold (1992) suggests that novice teachers need support to develop coping skills so they can handle these demands and develop self-reliance. In light of the fact that 22 percent of all new teachers leave teaching within the first three years (U.S. Dept. of Education 1999), it is vital that professional educators develop the capabilities to support beginning teachers. By working with novice teachers, whether they are student teachers or first-year faculty members, mentors can help strengthen the teaching profession and minimize the number of new teachers who leave the classroom for other kinds of work.

The benefits of mentoring affect more than just novice teachers. Experienced teachers often find that assisting other teachers with their careers and goals develops their own potential and brings about a new level of job satisfaction. The mentor's professional growth is enhanced through the collaborative focus of a mentoring relationship. The mentor and mentee both talk together about educational issues, and these intellectual interactions, based on the context of teaching, are vital to both teachers' continued development (Wolfe 1992). Thus, a mentoring relationship provides experienced teachers with an opportunity to expand their own learning and use their teaching expertise in a new way.

Why Mentors Are Needed

Often teachers are given training with the expectation that as a result of attending a workshop or class they will be able to implement a new idea or concept. Professional development does not "take" that quickly, and new

skills must be practiced, evaluated, and adjusted before teachers can truly apply them in the classroom. As with any new learning, the opportunity to hear different perspectives, and reflect and rethink, is the key to true understanding. Recent developments in brain research (Caine and Caine 1997b) identify the need for the brain to make connections. When educators have the opportunity to share their teaching experiences or their approaches to new ideas with other teachers, what they have learned in the training moves beyond a mechanical step-by-step approach to an embedded, effortless skill. As teachers converse about their efforts to use a new idea, an integrated, personalized approach emerges as connections are made between what they already know and do and the new idea they are introducing. Reflective, systematic thinking about teaching and learning helps teachers become problem solvers who can monitor and adjust their teaching to best support their students' learning (Wildman and Borko 1985). Talking to other teachers, hearing differing ideas, and reflecting on their own approaches is a vital component to educators' continued development and the implementation of any skill.

The success of new teachers is critically linked to their first teaching experiences and the opportunities they are given to talk through issues they face in the classroom. According to Shulman and Colbert, "Researchers and practitioners point to the first year as the critical year of teaching for it often determines whether a person will stay in teaching and what type of teacher the person will become" (1988, p. 1). Those who successfully complete the first year of teaching usually do so because they have connected with another teacher. Gold developed a process for providing psychological support for beginning teachers and mentors. Her work suggests that "before any assistance can be accepted by the beginning teacher, . . . a relationship must be developed between the two individuals" (1992, p. 30). First-year teachers often identify a critical friend who they turn to for support in the classroom and who they view as a role model.

Research has also identified the cooperating teacher as the most influential individual in a student teaching program (Funk et al. 1982). Interactions between the student teacher and the cooperating teacher will definitively shape the preservice teacher's future.

How to Use This Book

Throughout this book readers are asked to dialogue with colleagues who are also mentors or involved in the mentoring relationship about their experiences and their understanding of the mentoring role. It is im-

portant that teachers using this book have a group of colleagues with whom to dialogue, as the process of sharing experiences and discussing ideas for helping new teachers contributes to the development of strong mentoring skills. If a mentor has no other mentors or fellow educators with whom to dialogue, he or she can read through the text and contemplate the issues presented in the dialogue sections by writing down answers to questions and coming back to them at a later point to reflect on what was written. However, the dialogue sections are most effective when conducted with other experienced teachers who also serve as mentors. Learning from the repertoire of other educators, sharing stories from various classrooms, and discussing and reflecting on the experiences that have shaped others most profoundly affect a mentor's development. A veteran teacher's ideas and knowledge can reaffirm another's skills or lead others to explore new avenues in their teaching. Following this idea, this book provides opportunities for veteran teachers to discuss, debate, share, explore, and learn together in order to best facilitate the development of a new teacher. Thus, the "village elders" of the educational community pass along their knowledge and abilities to beginning teachers.

Before beginning the dialogues found in this text, mentors may choose to take the preprogram questionnaire—Mentor Teacher Questionnaire 1—presented in Chapter 6. This provides mentors with a snapshot of their knowledge as they begin reading this book. In addition, mentors can use the results of the questionnaire to individualize the mentoring process to best meet their needs. After mentors have completed the book, the follow-up Mentor Teacher Questionnaire 2 (also in Chapter 6) can be used to identify growth. These questionnaires provide mentors with a before and after picture of what they have learned about the mentoring process.

Some of the opportunities for dialogue are geared specifically toward the development of mentoring skills, and some are suggestions for dialogue between the mentor and mentee. Because mentors are the experienced members of the relationship, the majority of the dialogues are focused on strengthening the mentor's skills. However, all the tools, charts, role-plays, questions, and scenarios are meant to foster a positive mentoring relationship. Exercises may be modified to fit different situations, but random conversations, which are often used in interactions between experienced teachers and their protégés, do not maximize the potential of dialoguing exercises. With that in mind, mentors should use this book as a process, not just a product. The use of dialogue to enhance teaching and learning is as old as Socrates and just as powerful. Thus, the dialogues initiated through the use of this book can aid mentors in enhancing the learning of novice teachers and, by doing so, help improve the educational system and benefit all children.

Chapter 1

Defining the Mentoring Relationship

Before mentors take on the role of aiding and supporting a novice teacher, it is important that they fully understand how to use their personal vision of teaching in mentoring, how mentors support and aid novice teachers, and what is expected of them as mentors. Reflection on these issues can help mentors provide their mentees with the best support possible.

A Personal Vision of Teaching

There are as many different styles of teaching as there are teachers, and it is important that mentors find a way to describe their personal view of teaching to their mentees. This is also a good way for mentor teachers to begin a dialogue with their mentees. When mentors explicitly define their vision of teaching, it becomes easier for them to articulate their educational perspectives and philosophies to someone else. Once this can be described, members of the mentoring relationship can come to a shared understanding of what teaching is all about. This dialogue allows mentors to more readily assist novice teachers as they develop their own teaching style.

A simple, yet powerful way to describe teaching is through the use of a metaphor. By synthesizing their view of teaching into a literary comparison, teachers can visualize their approach to the classroom and share it with others. For example, one high school teacher uses the metaphor of a conductor to symbolize her vision of teaching. This metaphor represents her need to direct the learning of many different groups, as in an orchestra or a band. Each group of players or students plays from the same musical score, but they all play different parts. When all of the parts are added together, they create a whole, beautiful musical piece. This teacher works to meet the needs of a variety of learners while striving to help them all be successful. Thus, the metaphor of a conductor works well as a descriptor of her teaching and helps her articulate her vision of teaching to her mentee.

Metaphors provide opportunities for mentors and mentees to begin sharing their visions of teaching without preaching or lecturing. The following activity can help mentors determine their vision of teaching through a metaphor. This metaphor can later be shared with a mentee.

Dialogue: A Metaphor for Teaching

1. Compare the experienced teacher's metaphor of a conductor with the following two metaphors given by beginning teachers.
   A) "I see teaching as mountain climbing. As the teacher, I lead the climbers. I struggle to move up the mountain of learning step-by-step, and after I have made it, I turn and grasp the hands of my students, pulling them up behind me."
   B) "As the teacher, I am like a big fountain showering my students with all they need to know to be successful in my class."

   What does each metaphor of teaching say about the beginning teacher? What insights might each description give to you about each novice teacher if you were his or her mentor?

2. Develop a metaphor for your own teaching. Brainstorm about the various aspects of your work, and take notice of what images come to mind when you think about teaching. Avoid using examples that you have heard previously, and develop one that identifies a unique vision of your own teaching.

Once mentors have developed their metaphor, they can extend their personal vision of teaching by sharing their metaphor with a colleague and

refining it to meet their vision. Mentors can use Figure 1.1 to clarify their metaphor.

Developing a Personal Metaphor for Teaching

Mentor: State your metaphor for teaching and describe what the metaphor says about your vision of teaching.

Colleague Mentor: State your understanding of your fellow mentor's metaphor.

Mentor: Clarify any misunderstandings or misinterpretations of the metaphor by rewording it.

Now reverse roles so both participants have the opportunity to explain and clarify their metaphor.

Figure 1.1

Before sharing their metaphors with their mentees, mentors should ask mentees to write their own metaphor for teaching, explaining that the metaphor should reflect how the mentee sees teaching. Mentors and mentees can do the activity in Figure 1.2 together to begin developing a shared understanding of each other's view of teaching. Mentors without a mentor partner can write their answers to these questions and come back to them at a later time to reflect on their answers.

The sharing exercise in Figure 1.2 provides mentors with a process that enables them to define their own vision of teaching as well as come to a shared understanding of individual visions of teaching with their mentees. This shared understanding is an important first step in the mentoring relationship. Without this dialogue, mentors may view what is going on in their mentees' classrooms through their own vision of teaching. By sharing in this type of dialogue, novice teachers have an opportunity to compare their own vision of teaching with a seasoned teacher's, thus helping them gain insight and perspective. Likewise, it is important that mentors understand their mentees' visions of teaching and how this influences their classroom practices and interactions. When mentors understand their mentees' vision, they can support learning that helps their mentee achieve their vision. Mentors also can help mentees come to a new understanding of what teaching should be.

Unless mentors and mentees are both very clear on how they view teaching and learning events, miscommunication and misunderstanding

Metaphor Chart

Directions: Make a copy of this chart so each person has one to use. Complete each step, following the directions provided.

STEP ONE

Mentee:
Describe your metaphor for teaching. (i.e., "Teaching is . . ." or "Teaching is like . . .")*

_____
_____
_____

Exchange this with your mentor.

Mentor:
Describe your metaphor for teaching. (i.e., "Teaching is . . ." or "Teaching is like . . .")*

_____
_____
_____

Exchange this with your mentee.

STEP TWO

Mentee:
Describe what your mentor's metaphor tells you about his or her view of teaching. Write your description below.

_____
_____
_____

Exchange this with your mentor.

Mentor:
Describe what your mentee's metaphor tells you about his or her view of teaching. Write your description below.

_____
_____
_____

Exchange this with your mentee.

STEP THREE

Mentee:
Add to your description or clarify it if you feel that your mentor's understanding is incomplete or inaccurate.

_____
_____
_____

Exchange this with your mentor.

Mentor:
Add to your description or clarify it if you feel that your mentee's understanding is incomplete or inaccurate.

_____
_____
_____

Exchange this with your mentee.

STEP FOUR

Mentor and mentee together:
A) Discuss how your revised metaphor reflects your individual vision of teaching.
B) Answer these questions:
What is unique about each perspective?
What is the same?
How does your unique vision of teaching impact your work together?

_____
_____

* A note to English teachers: This describes a process for developing metaphors and similes—both are acceptable tools for describing a vision of teaching.

Figure 1.2

can occur. Sometimes a mentor may not share their mentees' vision of teaching, and in this case, it is important for the mentor to remember that the mentee's view is his or her reality, and must be considered in all conversations about teaching. Mentors can provide another way for beginning teachers to view teaching by modeling classroom interactions that demonstrate how their vision of teaching is different from their mentees' vision. Then, mentors can initiate dialogue that asks the novice to reflect on how he or she views the mentor's methods. Through this modeling-reflection process, a novice educator's vision of teaching can be shaped to reflect new understanding of the development of teaching and learning.

After the mentoring partnership has been in place for awhile, mentors should reintroduce the Metaphor Chart (see Figure 1.2) and ask their mentees to make any necessary changes to the description of their metaphors. A good time to do this is either at the midpoint of student teaching or at the end of the semester for first-year teachers. This is an opportunity for mentors to discuss how mentees are working to actualize the metaphors they created. Mentees may want to rewrite their metaphors at this point. In this case, mentors can discuss how mentees might focus their learning to support their new visions of teaching. It is possible that mentees will modify their original metaphors in a negative way, possibly reflecting the frustration or stress that sometimes comes with initial teaching situations. If this happens, it is important that mentors address underlying stresses so novice teachers do not base their vision of teaching solely on limited experiences. At this time, mentors can help their mentees reaffirm their original metaphors or develop new metaphors that reflect newly discovered, but positive, visions of teaching.

Mentors themselves may adjust their own visions of teaching after working with a novice. Theis-Sprinthall (1987) and Tannehill (1989) have written of cooperating teachers who described the profound effect their student teacher had on their own teaching. Whatever the case is, it is important for mentors and mentees to check signals now and then to make sure they still understand each other's perspective. If a vision is renewed or rewritten, mentors and mentees should discuss the steps that can be taken to support this vision of teaching.

Roles in Mentorships

The ways mentorships are conceptualized in school districts vary. However, no matter the school district, it is important that all individuals involved in any mentoring system know and understand their roles. Lack of clarity

regarding roles in a mentoring process can lead to confusion and ineffective support for novice teachers. Whether the process of support is for a student teacher or a first-year teacher, the roles of mentors, mentees, and supervisors that comprise the integral triad of the mentoring relationship must be clearly defined.

To develop mentoring skills, it is important that mentors be given the opportunity to collaborate with other mentors. The dialogue and reflection components of mentor development need to be provided—either through a formal process or by a group of mentors-to-be who are working together to enhance their skills. To that end, it is highly beneficial if educators working on their mentoring skills find another teacher with whom to share and reflect.

It is also important that mentors fully understand their mentees' mindsets, needs, and areas of concern before beginning mentoring relationships. This is not that difficult, since all experienced teachers were once novice teachers themselves. The following dialogue allows mentors to recall their own experiences as novice teachers (and hear the various experiences of others) to better understand their mentees.

Dialogue: Remembering Experiences

Look over the following questions and think about your answers. Share your experiences with another teacher or other mentors and listen to their experiences.

To Start the Conversation

Think back to when you were beginning your teaching career and found yourself in a strange classroom on the first day of student teaching.

- What did you expect your classroom cooperating teacher to do for you?
- How did your cooperating teacher fulfill that role?
- What did your college supervisor do to support you during that time?
- What did you do to make the experience successful?

Then, try to recall your first day as a classroom teacher.

- What kind of support did the district offer you as a newly hired teacher?
- Did you have the opportunity to talk with colleagues before you started?
- Did you find someone with whom you could share your concerns as the school year progressed?
- Did you feel isolated?
- Did you consider quitting?
- If you did consider quitting, what kept you going so that you persevered to become the teacher you are today?

To Extend the Conversation

After you have shared your beginning teaching experiences and listened to the experiences of others in your group, think about how each of the members of the student teaching triad played a role in the outcome of your student teaching experience, and answer the questions below. Then, share your answers with a colleague.

- What might have been different if the mentor had approached his or her role differently?
- What might have been different if the supervisor had approached his or her role differently?
- What might have been different if you, as the mentee, had approached your role differently?

Think about your first job in a school district and try to remember what might have made those first days and weeks less stressful. Try to recall an actual event that was problematic for you during those first days and weeks. Visualize this event and assess the support that was offered. Then, share your answers with a colleague.

- Do you remember how you handled the problematic event?
- Do you think you might have responded differently if you had been able to talk about your ideas and plans with another teacher?
- Did anyone offer you advice that you felt was not helpful?
- Did your principal or another administrator provide you with help?
- If so, how did this feel to you as a beginner?

By examining roles in the mentoring relationship they took part in, as well as stressful moments in their mentoring relationship, mentors can identify situations that might arise with their own mentees, and brainstorm positive ways to handle these situations.

Role Descriptions

The relationship that develops between mentor and mentee is vital to the effectiveness of their work together. When all parties in the relationship know what is expected of them, the mentorship develops into an effective and supportive process. The following role descriptions clarify the roles of each person in the mentoring relationship.

The Mentee

The role of the mentee is to be open to the process, to commit to the relationship, and to continue learning.

The individual who is being provided with a mentor usually has limited experience in the classroom. The assumption is that novice teachers benefit

from interaction with and support from someone who has spent many years successfully teaching students. Thus, it is imperative that mentees come to the mentoring process open to the idea of getting input from their mentors. While this may seem like a minor point, if mentees believe that they have the necessary skills to be successful in the classroom, they may feel uncomfortable or even threatened by the idea of being provided with support. Many people believe that they need to "do it on their own" for the success to be real. Mentees who approach their first teaching experience with the belief that it is a sign of weakness or failure to accept help are certainly not open to the suggestions and support of their mentors. Thus, the mentee must view his or her role as one of a partner to his or her mentor in strengthening the teaching profession. This is easier for some than for others, but it is critical that mentees recognize this aspect of their role. Mentors can help mentees understand this role by discussing the mentee's perception of the mentoring process and acknowledging that it is often hard for people to admit they need help. If mentees can identify their concerns about the idea of mentorship, they open the door to the process. Novice teachers who do not feel they need any help, and thus, do not value the mentoring relationship, can be a challenge. If this occurs, mentors need to continue to seek informal opportunities to spend time with their mentees. By focusing on developing a comfortable relationship, mentors create situations for developing a deeper mentoring exchange.

Mentees also must be willing to commit to the time it takes to work with someone else. Since beginning teachers often have many pressures and expectations placed on them, they often consider it easier to work alone than to carve out a few minutes to meet with someone on a regular basis. Mentees' commitment to the process and willingness to join in all of the mentoring activities and spend time with their mentors is a necessary aspect of a positive mentoring relationship.

It is also important that the mentee sees his or her role as that of a learner, as becoming a successful teacher is an ongoing process. Most college preparation programs focus on the concept of lifelong learner, but mentees must internalize this idea to create a successful mentoring situation. Whatever prior knowledge mentees bring to the mentor/mentee relationship must be used as a basis for discussion. It is important that mentor teachers stress to mentees that new understandings do not devalue what they have learned, but rather extend their knowledge in new directions to help them meet the needs of their students. If mentees see themselves as lifelong learners, they will be able to weigh new ideas and consider how these ideas fit with their own teaching philosophies, they will conduct action research to find answers to their questions, and they will stretch them-

selves in new directions. Mentees who only want to perfect the tools they bring to the classroom and who do not want to venture into any new directions do not fulfill their role in the mentoring relationship.

The Mentor

The role of the mentor is that of guide, supporter, friend, advocate, and role model.

The term *mentor* comes from Homer's *Odyssey* in which a wise and learned man called Mentor was given the task of educating Odysseus's son. Mentoring is an intentional pairing of individuals with the goal of providing the inexperienced person with an experienced partner to guide and nurture his or her development. The goal of mentors is not to create clones of themselves, but rather to help their mentees develop into the best teachers they can be. In the role of a guide, mentors do not necessarily engage in direct instruction with or make specific demands on mentees. Mentors do not force their knowledge on their mentees, but rather help them view things from a different perspective. This component of the mentoring role is crucial to the success of any mentoring process. If mentors are asked to evaluate or direct the behavior of their mentees, then they are no longer serving as a guide. A friend, guide, supporter, or advocate cannot easily provide unbiased information to a superior. If mentors are asked to step into the role of evaluator, the relationship between mentor and mentee will be irrevocably altered.

In the role of supporter, mentors need to accept their mentees as they are. Mentors must resist the desire to create a teacher like themselves, remembering that friends accept their friends the way they are. In the role of a guide, mentors can offer advice and suggestions to mentees to provide them with ideas and encouragement that will extend their skills. Valuing differences and supporting mentees as they learn to develop their own skills and talents is a critical aspect of the role of mentors.

The stress of student teaching or of being a first-year teacher can be overwhelming to many individuals. Mentors can support mentees by listening to mentees' anxieties and offering ideas, suggestions, or lending sympathetic ears as mentees struggle with the complexities of teaching. A nonjudgmental, accepting approach can create a supportive environment that enables a mentee to deal with stress. Offering unconditional emotional support and understanding for the rollercoaster of emotions that novice teachers experience during their initial teaching experience is also an important facet of being a mentor.

Sometimes the mentee's situation can become complicated by more complex stresses. At times mentees may exercise poor judgment or be ques-

tioned by parents or administrators about their work, and in such cases, mentors may need to step into the role of advocate. As an advocate, mentors may be the only person who can speak knowledgeably on behalf of their mentees. This can be a difficult and uncomfortable role for mentors, but if they have a good relationship with their mentees, they often feel compelled to step in.

One of the most important facets of the role of mentor is that of a role model. In all learning situations, hearing about how to do something is never as effective as watching it in action. As most school cultures are quite complex, it is imperative that mentors model for their mentee the types of behaviors and interactions that are expected. Respect for peers, a student-centered focus, and a collaborative approach to teaching and learning are just a few of the behaviors mentors can model. Mentors who have conversations with their mentees about effective teaching strategies and professionalism but fail to exhibit these qualities themselves are not providing their protégés with complete mentoring.

Above all, mentoring is a social relationship. Mentors need to be willing to spend time with their mentees to get to know one another, as strong mentor-mentee relationships develop through socialization. The value of the mentoring process depends on the strength of this relationship.

Administrative Supervisor/College Supervisor

The role of the supervisor is primarily that of evaluator, although he or she may also serve as an advocate and supporter.

A principal or college supervisor has the duty of assigning a grade or writing an evaluation for the novice teacher. The supervisor's observations are tempered by the fact that he or she must document the effectiveness of the beginning teacher for purposes of licensure, continued employment, or tenure. These decisions make it imperative that supervisors not be privy to all of the tribulations of mentees.

The supervisor's role often requires a more direct approach than the mentor's guided approach. While some supervisors can temper their observations, suggestions, and comments with an air of support, the very nature of their role as an evaluator can create angst for mentees. However, supervisors can be of great help to mentors when a mentee is failing to heed the comments and guidance provided by a mentor. A supervisor's comments can add weight and importance to a mentor's previously discounted suggestions. If mentees are not attempting to incorporate suggestions from their mentors, supervisors can point out these same issues to heighten a mentee's awareness. This may be an unplanned occurrence, or mentors may solicit a supervisor's help in focusing the novice on areas where more learning is needed.

In addition, supervisors may be in a position to stand up for mentees when questions about their performance arise. Due to their position, supervisors carry more weight than mentors, and if they see potential and effort on the mentee's part, they can communicate this effectively and with authority to those questioning the mentee's skills. This role may not be the preferred choice of supervisors, but it is an option. By taking on this role, supervisors can shield beginning educators from undue outside scrutiny that might negatively impact their developmental progress.

Flexibility of Roles

It is important to note that the role of supervisor and mentor may be reversed in some cases. In a student-teaching situation, the classroom teacher's role may become more of an evaluator than a mentor, with the classroom teacher giving directive statements to the beginner and offering little emotional support. This may occur when the classroom teacher is asked to grade the student teacher, or when little guidance has been offered to the classroom teacher in the past, and he or she is unaware of how to be an effective mentor. If the mentor has evaluative power, the relationship between the mentor and mentee will be affected. In these cases, the college supervisor may need to take on the role of mentor to provide an empathetic ear to the mentee.

Other times, the college supervisor may take on the role of mentor in addition to the classroom teacher. This creates an extremely supportive environment for the student teacher, but at some point the quality of the student teacher's work needs to be discussed. The college supervisor or the classroom teacher need to shift roles to evaluate, and when they do this, it is important that they clearly identify their role as evaluator at that time, so the mentee is aware of the focus of the conversation.

The roles for mentorship are usually more clearly established with first-year teachers than with student teachers. With first-year teachers the principal usually serves as the administrative supervisor and evaluates all beginning teachers. In this case, the principal should not ask the mentor for evaluative information about the mentee. Although principals are interested in the development of beginning teachers and may ask general questions about how things are going, mentors and supervisors should never exchange information for evaluation of the mentee.

The key to fostering a positive mentoring process is communicating and understanding roles and role expectations. Mentors can use the prioritization checklists in Figures 1.3–1.5 to develop a shared understanding of roles with others in their mentoring triad. These checklists can serve as starting points for a discussion of what mentors and mentees expect

from the relationship. The expectations reflected in Figures 1.3–1.5 were compiled by experienced mentors from various school districts and reflect the activities that correspond to each role. Each person in the mentoring relationship should fill out the checklists for all roles, then discuss with the others in the triad why he or she considers an item to be a valid expectation for each role. Participants should explain their priority ranking system to further clarify their personal vision of the mentoring process. This type of dialogue clearly defines the roles and expectations of everyone involved, and helps create a strong start to the mentoring experience.

Dialogue: Mentoring Roles

- Complete the following checklists (Figures 1.3–1.5) on the mentoring experience on your own before using them with your mentee. Then compare your responses with a colleague—either another teacher who is developing their mentoring skills or a fellow mentor. If you are working independently, it is important to consider alternative perspectives and reflect upon how an alternative view would impact a mentoring relationship. How does your vision of these roles impact your approach to the task of mentoring? Give yourself sufficient time to think about these expectations and identify your level of concern for each item. (It might be a good idea to mull over this activity for awhile before discussing it with another mentor.) When you are comfortable with using the checklists, after having reviewed them with a colleague, you can use them with your mentee.
- After all members of the mentoring relationship (supervisor, mentor, and mentee) have completed all of the forms, share your answers with each other. Discuss any variances in fellow participants' ratings. Any major differences or misunderstandings can be addressed. Discuss why particular components of the roles may matter more to one individual than another. Discuss how each individual can adapt and/or compromise his or her vision of these roles to reflect the needs of the others in the triad.
- Although you may find that you want to add items to these lists or move items from one list to another based on your particular mentoring program, please use the list as it is for this exercise so that your mentoring group has the same list to prioritize and discuss. Be sure to rank each item according to your own values. There is no right answer; this is simply a way to capture ideas about what should be expected from each member of the triad so these views can be explored in future dialogues.

Expectations for the Mentee

The following list identifies expectations for the mentee in the mentoring relationship. Please prioritize the list by giving each item only one number. Begin numbering with "1" and continue numbering until all items have received their prioritized ranking. Give a "1" to the most important expectation, a "2" to the next most important expectation, and so on, through 22.

The mentee will

____ come to the student teaching semester/first year of teaching exhibiting enthusiasm, a love for learning, and a genuine liking for young people

____ be open to developing a relationship with the mentor

____ be willing to try new ideas and suggestions offered by the mentor

____ bring to the experience ideas for topics and subjects that he or she would like to incorporate in his or her teaching

____ bring to the experience a solid knowledge base

____ bring to the experience a willingness to work hard

____ get to know the facilities, personnel, environment, and political structure of the school

____ be willing to create an interactive classroom via discussion groups, cooperative learning lessons, and by engaging students in higher-order questions, projects, and activities

____ develop lesson plans that reflect varying formats

____ develop and articulate a classroom management plan

____ develop flexible lesson plans that can change when schedules and student needs dictate

____ develop lesson plans that break down a concept and create a process for teaching it

____ identify objectives for the day/lesson (on board/verbally/in lesson plan) and share objectives with students

____ implement a variety of assessment strategies

____ commit to teach a unit that they develop, without relying on a text

____ identify his or her own learning style and explore how his or her learning style impacts his or her teaching

____ observe teachers from a variety of subject areas and varying grade levels

____ plan lessons that engage students of varying degrees of ability

____ get involved in the total school experience, via extracurricular activities and all teacher duties, meetings, etc.

____ communicate with the mentor teacher *daily*

____ exhibit a strong presence—the ability to stand up in front of the room and capture and hold student interest

____ address the various learning styles and multicultural identities of his or her students

Figure 1.3

Expectations for the Mentor Teacher

The following list identifies expectations for the mentor teacher in the mentoring relationship. Please prioritize the list by giving each item only one number. Begin numbering with "1" and continue numbering until all items have received their prioritized ranking. Give a "1" to the most important expectation, a "2" to the next most important expectation, and so on, through 29.

The mentor teacher will

____ communicate his or her expectations and objectives for the student teacher/first-year teacher at the start of the mentoring relationship

____ allow the mentee to develop his or her own teaching style

____ (for student teachers) assist the mentee in developing a schedule that identifies the gradual induction process (i.e., one class one week, adding a class and prep on a weekly basis; or two classes of the same prep that can be repeated later in the day, allowing for the mentor teacher to model a class that will be taught by the student teacher)

____ review the mentee's management plan and inform the mentee of school and district discipline policies

____ arrange for release time to team teach with the mentee early in the semester/year

____ arrange for introductions to other staff members, administrators, and school personnel

____ maintain confidentiality

____ arrange/encourage observations in other classes, levels of ability, and grade levels

____ arrange for the principal to observe the mentee in a nonevaluative mode

____ arrange for social interactions with the mentee

____ identify his or her own learning style and discuss with the mentee how this style impacts his or her teaching

____ provide an opportunity for the mentee to videotape his or her teaching both early and late in the semester/year

____ encourage the mentee to implement a variety of curricular, teaching, and assessment strategies

____ model infusion of multiculturalism on a daily basis (beyond the curriculum, as a part of life in the school)

____ model instruction that is differentiated for students with varying needs

____ create a schedule than ensures communication with the mentee on a daily basis

____ model effective interpersonal communication skills (in parent conferences, with administration and other faculty, and with students)

____ talk with mentee about career paths, discuss his or her goals and plans for the future

(continued)

Figure 1.4

- ____ discuss the legal issues of education with the mentee
- ____ provide mentee with information on state requirements and mandates and describe processes in place for meeting these expectations in the classroom
- ____ be aware of what is going on in the mentee's classroom by observing on a regular basis
- ____ provide evidence of the mentee's classroom interactions and teaching strategies to the mentee following observations
- ____ review lesson plans (check written plan and/or have mentee rehearse, discuss, or visualize)
- ____ provide the mentee with the opportunity to develop and teach his or her own curricular materials
- ____ review the observational tool ("lens") that will be used
- ____ offer suggestions in areas requested by the mentee
- ____ share curricular materials
- ____ confer with the supervisor as needed
- ____ serve as advocate when issues or concerns become problematic

Figure 1.4 (continued)

Expectations for the Supervisor

The following list identifies expectations for the supervisor in the mentoring relationship. Please prioritize the list by giving each item only one number. Begin numbering with "1" and continue numbering until all items have received their prioritized ranking. Give a "1" to the most important expectation, a "2" to the next most important expectation, and so on, through 15.

The school administrator or the college/university supervisor will

____ provide regular contact and observation of the mentee during the student teaching experience or first year of teaching

____ communicate with the classroom teacher on a regular basis

____ assist the mentee teacher in addressing future goals and career paths

____ provide seminars during the mentoring experience to discuss relevant issues and provide time for reflection

____ require all student teachers to attend the fall/spring workshop at the site where they will be student teaching

____ make sure first-year teachers/student teachers are aware of state mandates and requirements

____ expect a broad range of instructional strategies to be implemented and provide staff development/coursework to support this expectation

____ expect a broad range of curricular activities and assessment strategies to be implemented and provide staff development/coursework to support this expectation

____ provide/encourage a selection process where mentor teachers are chosen according to their qualifications to serve as master teachers

____ communicate expectations to the mentor teacher and the mentee

____ address the legal issues associated with teaching prior to the mentee's work in the classroom

____ refrain from using the mentoring process as a means of gathering evaluative information

____ provide as much support as possible for the mentor (in the areas of time, resources, and training)

____ serve as advocate for the novice teacher when others question the methods/processes they are using

____ when evaluating, provide opportunities for the mentee to discuss observations before forming opinions and generating conclusions about their teaching

Figure 1.5

Chapter 2

The Heart of Mentoring: Trust and Open Communication

As with any relationship, interactions between mentors and mentees must be based on trust. Without trust, those involved in the mentoring relationship are never really sure of each other's motives, and approach all conversations warily. Thus, trust is a vital component of the goal of the mentoring relationship, which is to support novice teachers and assist with their continued growth and development.

Building Trust

It is easy for someone to say, "Trust me," but the words must be backed up by actions and statements that prove trust. When novice teachers are assigned a mentor—someone they have yet to know personally—no trust exists. The desire to trust may be there, but trust is not established automatically; it takes time. Thus, it is imperative that mentors take time to build a trusting relationship with their mentees at the start of their relationship. Although the first days of a novice teacher's teaching experience are very hectic—leaving mentees without much time to spend with their mentors—mentoring programs need to make time for building trust a part of the planning. In addition, educators who are

considering serving as mentors but are uncomfortable with the necessary time commitment should reconsider their views. Mentoring is often like parenting. Parents are never sure how much time and effort is needed to support their child, but they are committed to doing whatever it takes to help their child be successful. Mentors must be committed to giving their time and energy to ensure the success of their mentees in the same way.

Once mentors have determined that they are comfortable with the time commitment associated with mentoring, they need to use their initial interactions with their mentees to build their relationship. The first way to do this is to share ideas and experiences. Without sharing, there is no relationship. Mentors and mentees can begin by meeting for coffee, going to lunch, or attending a mentor/mentee breakfast or after-school seminar prior to any classroom observation. Talking about previous experiences, hobbies, and leisure activities allows mentors and mentees to get to know each other beyond classroom roles.

The first steps in a relationship require some self-disclosure. Mentors who share information about themselves usually find that their mentees match their level of intimacy in their response. According to Weaver (1987), if one shares information about him- or herself, the listener usually responds. Sidney Jourard (1971) also conducted research on self-disclosure, and he contends that allowing oneself to be known to others is healthy. Lawrence Rosenfeld's (1979) research, as well as the work of J. W. McDaniels et. al. (1971) indicates that individuals often refrain from self-disclosure because they are afraid they might project an image they do not want to present. Yet trust develops when one takes a risk and discloses a thought or feeling, and the other person responds in kind. This applies to the mentoring relationship as well: as sharing stories and information becomes more comfortable and natural, mentees are able to trust their mentors more as they share their own fears and concerns. Mentors also need to disclose their own personal sentiments to their mentees (keeping in mind that the level of self-disclosure needs to be appropriate for the relationship). Without such disclosure by mentors, it is unlikely that mentees will feel they can share their feelings or concerns. Reciprocal sharing, starting with safe topics and building up to more difficult issues, is the path to building trust.

Mentors can use metaphors to describe visions of teaching (as outlined in Chapter 1) and to structure initial discussions once they get beyond introductory conversations. It is also helpful for mentors to initiate a discussion on the roles of mentors, mentees, and supervisors (see Figures 1.3–1.5 in Chapter 1). Discussing metaphors and role expectations allows for a shared vision of teaching and the roles in the mentoring relationship. It is very important that mentors not assign any negative value to a mentee's

vision of teaching or the way he or she assesses mentoring roles. Instead, mentors can discuss whether they and their mentees have differing perspectives to make their mentees aware of whether they are on the same page. A trusting relationship makes discussing differing perspectives easier, and being aware of the other person's perspective gives the relationship a starting point—a ground zero—from which to build on.

Mentors can read the following conversation to get a sense of how they can work to build trust. Then, they can analyze this conversation for tips on how to approach initial conversations with their own mentees. Practicing and reflecting on dialogues can help mentors feel comfortable creating trust-building conversations.

Scenario for Trust Building: Initial Disclosure

Role-play and analyze this initial conversation on your own or with another mentor. While reading this sample dialogue, look for signs of trust building, and think about what else you notice in the mentor's choice of conversation.

MENTOR: (shakes hand with mentee) Hi, _____! Did you find your way to the school OK? Great! Would you like some coffee or a soft drink?

MENTEE: Thanks. I'd love some coffee . . . finding my way here took a little longer than I had expected.

MENTOR: Well, when I go anyplace new, I always have to allow extra time for getting lost!

MENTEE: I'm just not used to judging distances while driving to new places.

MENTOR: Well, I'm glad you're here so that we can get to know each other a bit. I realize that this experience is an important milestone in your career, and I'm looking forward to sharing it with you. It doesn't seem that long ago that I was a beginning teacher, but I know a lot has changed since then. It will be fun to hear someone's ideas on teaching who has the perspective of being fresh out of college! I remember the feelings I had as I started student teaching—kind of scared, but excited, too.

MENTEE: Yeah, it feels a little overwhelming.

MENTOR: Well, we'll take care of that soon enough. So tell me, what lead you to this point in your life—how did you decide to become a teacher?

MENTEE: Well, I've always loved working with kids. I spent a lot of time baby-sitting when I was younger, and I'm always amazed by the things kids can do. I had some wonderful teachers myself, and teaching seemed like such a positive thing to do with my life.

MENTOR: Where are you from?

MENTEE: I grew up downstate, but I went to high school in . . . .

Debrief with a partner regarding the conversation or write down your thoughts about these questions.

- What did you hear in this initial conversation?
- How did the mentor begin to establish a trusting relationship?
- What would you talk about next?
- Did you hear any examples of self-disclosure? If so, describe the example and identify how it was/was not matched by the listener.

After sharing thoughts with a partner or writing down ideas, mentors can see if their thoughts were similar to those of other mentors-in-training who responded to this exercise. Mentor teachers who reviewed this dialogue identified welcoming comments (Did you find your way okay? Would you like some coffee?), self-disclosing comments (I get lost. It doesn't seem that long ago that I was a beginning teacher.), the sharing of feelings (I remember the feelings I had as I started student teaching.), and rapport-building comments (How did you decide to become a teacher? Where are you from?). All of these comments, statements, and questions are designed to start building a trusting relationship.

There are many other questions mentors can use to initiate conversations with their mentees. Some of these questions include the following:

- What do you love to do when you get a free Saturday with no commitments?
- Where would you go if you could travel anywhere you wanted? Why would you go there?

Mentors can also share some of their own past experiences in the initial conversation. Some of the things mentors can discuss include the most difficult situation they experienced while student teaching, and the most challenging aspect of their first year of teaching.

To avoid having initial conversations take on the tone of an interview—or worse, an interrogation—mentors can use some lead in connection to their own lives. For example, a mentor might preface the question about leisure time by saying, "I really enjoyed this summer (or the weekend, or a holiday). I was able to do _____, which I really enjoy. What do you like to do when you have a free day?"

Preface statements allow the conversation to flow more naturally. If mentors reveal something about themselves to create a comfortable lead-in before asking their mentee a question, a link is created between mentors and mentees.

Open Communication

Open communication is necessary to build trust, but trust is necessary for open communication to occur. This endless loop makes it difficult for mentors to know where to begin their focus when they are working with a mentee. It is important that mentors remember that this process is not linear, but circular, and as such a starting point is needed. Mentors can establish trust more easily while working to communicate openly if some ground rules are established for interactions. While the term *ground rules* may sound negative and perhaps unnecessary, communication conflicts can be avoided with a plan for approaching conversations. Mentors can use the guidelines in Figure 2.1 for their ground rules or create their own to fit the needs of their mentoring relationship. These ground rules can be a starting point for developing trust and open communication.

Ground Rules

Ground rules for _____ (mentor) and _____ (mentee's) working relationship. Rules apply to both parties.

1. Honesty is key. We need to say what we are feeling and thinking when we talk to each other.
2. Ask questions. If you are not sure about what has been said, ask, "What do you mean?" Avoid filling in the blanks with your own interpretation—ask for clarification.
3. Create and stick to a schedule. Regular, planned times for conversation, observation, and informal get-togethers are vital to developing the relationship.
4. Respect the other's needs. It is okay to let the other person know that the timing of an unplanned conversation is not the best. But always set up a time in the near future for a phone call or conference to discuss the issue, and follow up on all concerns in a timely fashion.

Signed by: _____ (mentor) and _____(mentee) Date: _____

Figure 2.1

Ground rules state publicly what both partners will do for each other. The commitment to these rules provides a solid base from which trust can be developed and open communication can occur.

Open communication is based on honesty and takes into consideration the use of verbal, nonverbal, and paralinguistic interactions. Mentees sense that their mentors are truthful from the words that they use (verbal), the physical expressions and body language they exhibit (nonverbal), and the

tone and inflection of their voice (paralinguistic). Messages are sent when individuals communicate, but the meaning of those messages is only perceived in the mind of the individual who hears the message (Hamilton with Parker 1990). While no mentor intentionally sends his or her mentee mixed signals, often not enough attention is paid to the use of verbal, nonverbal, and paralinguistic messages, and miscommunication results, obscuring the effectiveness of the mentor/mentee relationship.

Verbal Messages

Verbal messages are often considered to be the most accurate part of a dialogue between two people. How can spoken words be misinterpreted? Yet individuals cannot be sure that the verbal messages they send are actually what is heard by the listener. One married couple, for example, often checks signals on the amount of gas left in the car before the other uses it. If the woman hears from her husband, "There is enough gas to get you there," she interprets that to mean that she has at least a quarter of a tank. However, many times after hearing this from her husband she has found the needle on the gas gauge to be near empty. The woman may feel that her husband is not giving her a straight answer, but according to his view he is telling her the truth. He believes that even if the gas indicator is near empty, there is enough gas to get her to most places she wants to go. This is his interpretation of enough gas. The woman, however, does not have the same understanding of enough gas. Over time, this couple has come to understand that they mean very different things when they say or hear the words, "There is *enough* gas." Their awareness of the other's understanding of the words has enabled them to prevent conflict. This example demonstrates that individuals in any relationship need to carefully check signals to be sure that what is said is what is heard by the other party.

Mentors can read the following conversation to analyze the impact of verbal signals in communication.

Scenario: Focus on a Verbal Message

Ask two people to read the exchange between a novice teacher and a mentor while you listen. After you have "heard" the exchange, list the ways that the verbal message (*words only*) could be interpreted by the mentee.

MENTOR: Hi, Sam. I found it really interesting observing you in class today. I'm glad we can take some time to discuss what went on.

MENTEE: Yeah, things didn't go exactly as I had planned.

MENTOR: Let's talk about that. What did you plan and how did the actual lesson vary from that plan?

MENTEE: My goal was to have the kids explore the various properties of paper by having them feel the paper, write on it, tear it, and soak it in water—and I had a whole bunch of different types of paper for them to use. I had wax paper, construction paper, cardboard, typing paper, notebook paper, toilet paper, and paper towels.

MENTOR: There was a lot for them to explore.

MENTEE: Yeah—maybe too much. They were so busy doing the tearing and soaking that they didn't write down any of their discoveries.

MENTOR: I didn't hear any of the directions you gave the students.

MENTEE: Well, it was a discovery lesson.

MENTOR: Discovery? Hmmmm.

MENTEE: We learned about teaching by discovery in my methods class at the university.

MENTOR: Do you think that a discovery lesson fit what you were trying to do?

Debrief with a colleague or write out your answers. What are the various ways that the words used by the mentor could be misinterpreted? What about the word choices of the mentee? Try rewriting this dialogue using different word choices to see if you can find some language that is clearer to the listener. Ask two people to read the dialogue again, so you can practice listening to your word choices and their possible implications.

Some mentors who analyzed this conversation came up with these suggestions for clarifying the verbal message:

- Using the word *interesting* to describe the lesson might be interpreted negatively by the mentee. A simple "Thanks for letting me hang out in your class today" might be a better beginning, as it does not allow for misinterpretation.
- The question "What did you plan . . . ?" is supportive because it suggests that the mentee actually did have a plan.
- The words "Discovery? Hmmmm," might be interpreted as a negative comment through which the mentor indicates this is not something he or she cares for, or it might be interpreted as an inquisitive comment. In either case, the word choice is open to misinterpretation by the mentee.
- The statement "Well, it was a discovery lesson," made by the mentee might seem to be justifying his or her decision.

This role-play demonstrates that mentors need to think about their word choices to make sure they are not being misconstrued. For example, to clarify meaning after using the word *interesting* in the dialogue, the

mentor might have said, "I am always amazed by all the various methods that can be used in the classroom." This kind of explanation can help avoid misinterpretation.

There is no way for individuals to be absolutely sure that what they say is interpreted by the listener in the way they intended it. Therefore, it is important that mentors check signals by asking questions when they are not sure about what they have heard, and it is equally important that mentors are sure their mentees heard their words the way they intended. If mentors think they might have heard something incorrectly, they need to ask, "So you are saying that . . . ?" or "Do you mean . . . ?" to check the accuracy of their interpretation. Without checking signals, mentors may have a false impression of what occurred in the classroom or an inaccurate view of what mentees think. If mentors have a trusting relationship with their mentees, it is easier for them to ask their mentees if they are comfortable with the communication that took place, and be sure they have gotten an honest answer.

Another way mentors can avoid misinterpretation is to give the lead to their mentees. For example, when first talking to mentees about a classroom observation, mentors should not qualify what they have seen by giving it any descriptors. Mentors can make a statement such as "Thanks for giving me the opportunity to see students in action" or "I appreciate you letting me spend time in your class." Mentees are usually eager to know if mentors liked the lesson or not; thus, a mentor's initial comments may be interpreted as a statement of "like" or "dislike" toward what happened in the classroom. A mentor's lead-in statement should not give a mentee any indicator of his or her feelings. Lead-in statements should be emotionally neutral, so mentors do not inadvertently send a signal to their mentees that interferes with the discussion. If mentees think their mentor did not like their lesson, they may become defensive and unable to hear the mentor's comments and suggestions. On the other hand, if mentees think their mentor liked the lesson, they may discount the mentor's suggestions. The use of statements such as "That was interesting," "That was nice," or "Wow, I'd be worn out after that class," are vague and can be misinterpreted by an anxious beginner. It is easy to imagine a novice teacher thinking, "An interesting class? What does that mean? Was it too rowdy? Is she saying interesting because she doesn't want to be critical? Was it interesting because there was so much going on that needs to be fixed?" A neutral lead-in serves as a transition from the actual lesson to the conversation that concerns the lesson.

As mentors and mentees work at open communication, having ground rules is useful as mentors can refer to them and ask their mentees if they are clear about what was said. If ground rules are established that say that both mentors and mentees will work to be open and honest with each

other, and that both parties need to clarify if something is not clear, a reference point for checking signals is established. Mentors can work toward open communication by saying something such as, "In our ground rules we agreed to be open with each other. So, I would really like it if you would let me know if there is anything I said that is confusing to you or that doesn't seem to connect with what you are thinking."

Mentors can further investigate the importance of checking signals through the following exercise.

Dialogue: Exact Language

Ask another mentor or mentee (or even a family member or friend) to list what they mean when they say the following statements, and then answer the questions yourself. Next, share your interpretations with each other. What did you learn about yourself and the person you exchanged lists with regarding your individual understanding of the words? How can you use this knowledge in your work with your mentee?

What do you mean when you say these phrases (be as specific as possible)?

- "I'll be there in a few minutes."
- "Can I borrow a couple of bucks?"
- "Can I borrow some money?"
- "Come here a second."
- "I'll be right there."
- "It needs some work."
- "It's okay."
- "Lots of times."

When you use these words, what do they mean to you?

- Sometimes
- Always
- Never
- Usually
- Maybe

This exercise demonstrates how important it is to use exact language to help avoid misinterpretation. If, for example, a mentor states that his or her mentee never gets the students refocused after a disruption, the imprecise language may create a barrier as the mentee might think, "It's not true that I *never* get the students refocused." The mentor might have used the word *never* for impact or just failed to consider how the word might be in-

terpreted. "That was good," "I liked that," and "That needs some work" are all statements that do not use exact language. Mentors can prevent misinterpretation by telling the mentee specifically what was good, exactly what occurred in the classroom that they liked and why, and identifying what needs some work. By being specific, communication can be much more accurate and effective.

Nonverbal Messages

Many people have probably heard the statement, "It's not what you said, it's how you said it." This statement exemplifies how the nonverbal components of communication must be considered as well as the verbal. Nonverbal signals include facial expressions, vocal tone, inflection, and body stance. It is important that nonverbal messages match verbal messages, as people often tend to pay more attention to these signals than to words.

People's faces and bodies often reveal what they are feeling, even if their words do not. If someone frowns as she tells her guest that she is glad he dropped by to visit, the guest gets the message that she is really not very pleased to see him. If a person lowers his eyes and looks away as he tells a colleague that he likes her idea, she may get the message that he is not sincere. Listeners add meaning to the messages they hear as they make sense of the words and interpret nonverbal signals. Sending contradicting verbal and nonverbal signals is a common cause of miscommunication. Mentors can communicate more accurately by being aware of nonverbal messages.

Vocal tone is a component of nonverbal language called paralanguage, and it is what is remembered more than the actual words used when a person speaks. According to research by George Trager (1958), vocal tone is what occurs in conversations beyond or in addition to the words we speak. The match or mismatch between what is said and the tone used is very important in conversations. If the tone matches the words, the message is believable; if the tone is not congruent with the words, it is the tone that delivers the message.

It it important that mentors match their tone to their verbal message. If a mentor tells her mentee that she wants to support him, but uses a contradictory or inconsistent tone when uttering the words, the words will not be heard by the mentee. For example, if a mentor tells a mentee that he likes the way she called on her students in class, but he says it hesitantly while looking away, the mentor sends a nonverbal cue that he does not necessarily mean what his words convey. Mentors can try the following exercises to heighten their awareness of nonverbal communication and the use of paralanguage.

Dialogue: Nonverbal Practice 1

Say the following phrases to another mentor or videotape yourself. Try to convey the positive emotion listed in the parentheses. If you are using a videotape, watch your physical stances, gestures, and facial expressions and listen to your verbal tone when you play back the video. If you are having another mentor watch you, have your partner reflect back to you what they see in your face and body and what tone and voice they hear. Answer the questions at the end of the exercise. The goal is to get a sense of how you convey these emotions.

"I think you're doing a great job!" (enthusiasm)
"When you said that to the student, what was their response?" (thoughtfulness)
"The class was on task, even if they were a bit loud." (confidence)
"I know it's hard to find time to create your lesson plans." (support)
"Do you want me to give you some suggestions?" (questioning)
"I really enjoyed watching the students interact in their small groups yesterday." (pleased)
"It's tough when a parent gets angry with you." (empathy)
"I saw what you did with the fourth grade math lesson on fractions yesterday." (awe)

Follow-up questions:

- From your observations or the feedback you received, describe how your nonverbal signals matched your messages.
- What might you need to do to change your tone, facial expressions, or body language to more accurately reflect the words you are speaking?

Mentors who discussed the questions following the dialogue exercise above identified that it was not always easy to match their vocal tone and nonverbal signals. They noted that having an awareness of their use of tone and the ways in which they created the tone they wanted was important. By listening to themselves and working with peers, these mentors felt they were able to monitor their own use of tone and nonverbal signals to create accurate messages when they communicated. Mentors agree that it is important to convey confidence to mentees, even if there is some doubt in the mentor's mind about the novice teacher's capabilities, and the vocal tone is very important when conveying confidence. If mentees hear mentors tell them they are improving, but hear uncertainty in the mentor's voice, they probably will not believe the mentor. This leads mentees to have a lack of confidence in themselves, and to begin to distrust their mentor. Mentees expect honesty, and if they get a sense that their mentor does not mean what they say, the relationship is negatively impacted.

Mentors can engage in the dialogue exercise in Nonverbal Practice 2 to identify nonverbal and paralinguistic signals that go with negative emotions. By becoming aware of the signals of these emotions, mentors can work to avoid them.

Dialogue: Nonverbal Practice 2

Practice saying the phrases listed below using the identified negative emotion and accompanying nonverbal signals. Videotape yourself or have another mentor provide feedback. This exercise strengthens your awareness of the tone, stance, gestures, and facial expressions that accompany *negative* emotions, so you can monitor your own interactions to avoid inadvertently sending a message that you do not intend.

"I think you're doing a great job." (hesitancy)
"When you said that to the student, what was their response?" (anger)
"The class was on task, even if they were a bit loud." (sarcastic)
"I know it's hard to find time to create your lesson plans." (unbelieving)
"Do you want me to give you some suggestions?" (demanding)
"I really enjoyed watching the students interact in their small groups yesterday." (sarcastic)
"It's tough when a parent gets angry with you." (unconcerned)
"I saw what you did with the fourth grade math lesson on fractions yesterday." (disbelief)

Follow-up questions:

- What did you pay more attention to, the words or the emotion (nonverbal message) of each phrase?
- How would you feel if you heard these messages (and tone)?
- What could you do to create a more positive tone/emotion to match these verbal and nonverbal messages?

The reflection questions following the phrases listed above identify the contradiction that occurs when a person says words that by themselves might seem positive, but are reflected using a negative tone and body language. When this happens, the listener often focuses on the emotion conveyed in such a contradictory message.

It is important that mentors practice matching their tone to the words they speak, especially when conversing with a mentee. Awareness of tone, facial expression, and body language help one match verbal and nonverbal messages. Mentors can use a mirror or practice with a friend to increase their ability to monitor their tone and nonverbal messages.

Nonverbal communication also includes factors such as the distance people stand from one another as they speak, eye contact, the way people take turns talking, how people listen, and when people choose to communicate. Some of these aspects of communication are cultural and some are gender based (Samovar, Porter, and Jain 1981). If a mentee and mentor do not share the same cultural background, it is important that the mentor think carefully about these differences. During the getting-acquainted process at the beginning of the mentoring relationship, it is critical that both parties talk about how they communicate, and perhaps also include diverse communication perspectives in the ground rules. For example, during an initial conversation with a mentee, mentors should identify their personal preferences for communication and ask the mentee to share what their preferences are. A mentor might say, "I really find that I like to think about an issue for awhile before I am ready to decide what to do about the problem. I know that some of my colleagues like to jump right in with solutions, but I like to mull things over. So, I may be very quiet about things while I am thinking. This doesn't mean that I am not happy about what I have observed or what we are discussing, it just means I am thinking. I wanted you to know that so you can get a sense of my communication style. What about you? How do you like to approach issues?"

Mentors who often react with intense emotions, speak loudly and with authority, or are aware that they really do not like to spend a lot of time hashing over an issue should communicate these things to their mentee. Mentees may use or prefer other communication styles, and mentors need to be aware of these differences to set up ground rules that identify and validate these differences in communication styles.

In addition, mentors should keep in mind that various patterns of communication have been described as gender related. For example, Deborah Tannehill (1989) states that male communication responses to a problem often include specific ideas for solving the issue, while female communication responses lean more toward nurturing and empathic statements. These patterns need to be explored to determine if they reflect the individuals involved, and mentors should definitely consider these patterns if they have a different problem-solving style than their mentees.

The following aspects of nonverbal communication identify a European-American cultural perspective and the impact these components may have on a conversation. These components should be given attention in all mentoring relationships. Mentors who are mentoring someone with different cultural communication standards should explore these aspects of intercultural communication. Mentors can start by asking their mentees about their comfort level with the following aspects of communication.

Proximity

As everyone has a certain comfort level with the personal space that surrounds them, standing too close to another during conversation can create discomfort for a person. In a situation where a mentee may perceive the mentor as having more power (e.g., in a student teaching situation), standing too close while talking may heighten the sense of dominance. This is not productive when trying to develop trust.

Turn-taking

A speaker who does not allow someone to complete what he or she is saying, but rather jumps in with comments or suggestions, can give the impression of not caring if he or she hears what the other person is saying. Interrupting someone minimizes his or her contributions to the conversation. In open communication, each member of the conversation has an equal right to speak, and taking turns is important. Mentoring is not about one person telling the other what to do—it is about sharing information to reach conclusions about educational practice.

Eye Contact

Most Americans expect people to look them in the eye when they talk to them, and if the listener looks away, the speaker may perceive a lack of interest. On the other hand, when someone stares at another person with an intense gaze, it can be disarming as well. Mentors should strive to use the appropriate level of eye contact to reflect their interest and support when speaking with their mentees.

Listening

There is a listening stance that communicates that someone is paying attention to what is being said in a conversation. A person who is leaning forward and concentrating on what the speaker is saying signals that he or she is listening. Another aspect of listening is balance in the conversation. Mentors need to keep this in mind, giving their mentees plenty of opportunities to talk about what is happening in their classroom.

Use of Time

Allowing significant time for a conversation to occur is another signal that the message is important. If mentors set up a time to talk with their mentees and then frequently change the meeting time or look at their watch and seem eager to get going, mentees may feel that what they have to say is not valued. This undermines trust and prohibits open communication.

By paying attention to the process of communication, mentors can develop trust and provide for open dialogue with their mentees. Without trust and open communication little is accomplished because the mentee will not share important issues or concerns. In order to have important discussions that can lead to improved teaching and higher levels of learning for students, mentors must pay attention to these components of their relationship with their mentees.

Chapter 3

Addressing the Needs of the Mentee

All beginning teachers have certain areas where they need to focus their development. No one starts a teaching career with the ability to handle all situations. Following this idea, it serves no purpose to tell a beginner they are performing well and provide them with no direction. The mentor's job is to help novice teachers identify areas where they need to continue to grow. This dialogue is more effective if mentors have developed open, honest communication with their mentees (see Chapter 2). Honest communication allows the mentor to see clearly what is happening in a mentee's classroom and provide the mentee with specific information in a manner that enables him or her to hear the message. Obviously, the easiest situation for mentors occurs when mentees are aware of their needs and communicate them to the mentor. Comments from mentees such as "I know I need to work on how I transition between subjects" or "I am not sure about structuring my groups for cooperative learning, do you have some suggestions?" provide a mentor with a positive starting point for discussing the mentee's needs.

However, early in a relationship, as trust and open communication are just starting to develop, mentees may not yet feel safe enough to reveal their perceived weaknesses. Mentees also may be so overwhelmed that they do not know what to focus on first, or they may be unaware of

some of the problems that are occurring in the classroom as they struggle to get through each day.

Student teachers are in an especially unique position in regards to sharing weaknesses, because their future employment can be impacted by the mentor/cooperating teacher's letter of recommendation. The desire to obtain a positive letter may make student teachers fearful of revealing their weaknesses. While a letter of recommendation is not an evaluation, student teachers often perceive this letter as their ticket to a job, resulting in a desire to be seen by their mentors only in a positive light. Likewise, first-year teachers know that they are on probationary status, and this can affect their willingness to discuss areas of concern. This problem is avoided when the mentor does not serve as the evaluator, and rather the college supervisor or principal (see Chapter 1) evaluates the mentee. If the mentor must serve as the evaluator, all parties in the mentoring relationship must understand that it will be difficult for the mentee to be completely open and honest and the mentoring relationship may not be as productive. However, it is possible that if trust is established and mentors use supportive language, mentees may be able to overcome their hesitation.

Mentors must be able to identify issues for their mentees if they are not aware of them, and provide their mentees with support as they learn how to address these concerns. If things are going well in the classroom and there are no apparent areas of concern, mentors can help novice teachers move into new areas of learning and set realistic goals for continuing to develop their skills.

Dealing with Diverse Needs

Novice teachers enter the classroom with a variety of skill levels. Some new teachers are very well-versed in methods for engaging students in learning, while others are comfortable with only one strategy, such as large group instruction. Many novice teachers have limited experience in day-to-day classroom interactions and need support in developing positive learning environments and effective classroom management techniques. No matter where mentees are at when the relationship begins, the mentor's job is to help them move forward.

Although mentees may begin their teaching experience with different skill levels, they move through similar stages of development as they hone their teaching strategies. It is often helpful for mentors to consider the development of novice teachers in light of the mentees' ability to see clearly what is happening in the classroom. These stages are described in various ways (Head, Reiman, and Theis-Sprinthall 1992), but usually proceed as follows:

• **Focus on the self.** At first, mentees are usually focused on themselves. Completing the day-to-day work of teaching and figuring out how to do the job is most mentees' primary focus when they begin teaching. This stage is characterized by mentees' concerns about how they personally are doing. Questions such as "Did I have too much of . . . ?", "Did you notice how I . . . ?", or "Did you like the way I . . . ?" show that mentees primarily see themselves as the focus of the classroom. At this stage, mentees often articulate their concerns about how they are performing and request items that address their needs. "Where do I get things copied?", "How do I take attendance?", or "What should I do about homework?" are all examples of questions that focus on the mentee's needs as a teacher. Mentors can respond to these types of questions with direct statements that allow mentees to move beyond this self-centered stage. By providing specific answers, and by asking new teachers to think about how the lesson worked for the class or for a particular student, mentors can shift the mentee's focus. Novice teachers who continue to see teaching in terms of what they (as teachers) do, as opposed to what students do, need to be prompted in a more direct fashion to consider outcomes of this perspective on student learning.

• **Focus on the class.** As mentees develop confidence, their focus shifts and they start to see the needs of the class. At this point, they voice concern for their students' learning and not just their own performance as a teacher. Their comments move from a focus on self to consideration for the class as a whole. "Do you think they got it?", "Were there enough materials for all of them to do the work?", and "Will the class enjoy this book?" are all examples of comments that depict concern for the overall learning taking place in the classroom. When these questions are asked, mentors need to respond to their mentees with ideas and resources.

• **Focus on individual students.** After awhile, new teachers begin to see individual students and react to their needs. "Johnny has trouble with . . . ," "Mary needs to be challenged more in reading," and "Sara is easily distracted and should sit by someone who will be a role model" are all statements that show a growing awareness of how unique each student is. This higher level of awareness identifies a teacher who has moved beyond the initial reactive and self-preservation stage and no longer sees the class as a collective body, but rather as individuals with various learning needs.

Figure 3.1 illustrates the stages of development beginning teachers experience. When mentees reach the stage of perceiving the class as individuals with various needs, mentors should not direct the conversations, but rather should let novices direct the problem solving. Listening to mentees

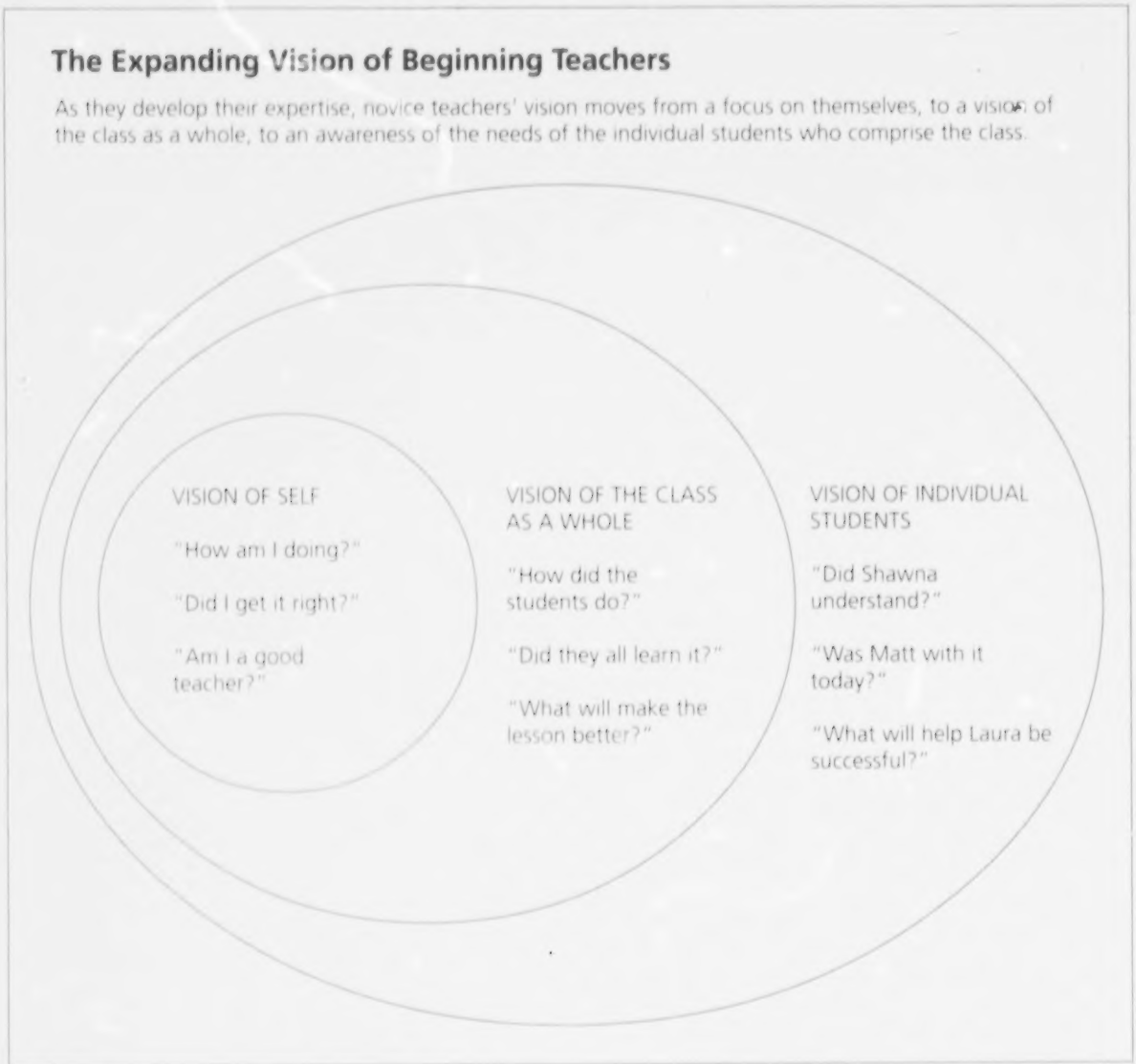
The Expanding Vision of Beginning Teachers
As they develop their expertise, novice teachers' vision moves from a focus on themselves, to a vision of the class as a whole, to an awareness of the needs of the individual students who comprise the class.
VISION OF SELF
"How am I doing?"
"Did I get it right?"
"Am I a good teacher?"
VISION OF THE CLASS AS A WHOLE
"How did the students do?"
"Did they all learn it?"
"What will make the lesson better?"
VISION OF INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS
"Did Shawna understand?"
"Was Matt with it today?"
"What will help Laura be successful?"

Figure 3.1

as they plan to address student needs and offering support for their decisions facilitates their independence as educators. If a mentee struggles with this problem solving, mentors might offer suggestions—in the form of questions—to direct the mentee's thinking. "I wonder if that will help Sarah keep focused in class?" and "Do you think that will work for all the students?" are examples of the types of questions mentors might use in response to their mentees' decisions. Guiding questions are always appropriate and helpful, as they allow mentors to gently redirect and focus a mentee's thinking while encouraging the development of the mentee's own problem-solving abilities.

Throughout the mentoring experience, one of the most meaningful gifts mentors can give mentees is the time and opportunity to reflect on their own teaching. The ability to be reflective provides new teachers with the skills to continue their own learning long after the first years of teaching. By listening to their concerns, describing what is happening in the classroom, and asking guiding questions, the mentor can support the mentee's efforts to enhance learning. If new teachers learn to think carefully about what occurs in the classroom, they will find ways to continually improve their teaching and learning to meet individual student needs. Reflection enables teachers to find answers to their own questions and enhances their professional satisfaction, and as a result, the students in their classrooms are more likely to flourish. Educators who never are asked or given the opportunity to reflect on their practice cannot be expected to grow and learn.

Novice teachers have many initial, diverse needs that mentors must support. The needs of mentees vary greatly in depth, but the following list identifies needs experienced by all new teachers to some extent. Mentors can determine what needs to focus on with their mentees by interacting with their mentees and getting to know them. These needs include the following:

- The need to accurately see what is happening in the classroom
- The need for guiding questions
- The need for an action plan and resources
- The need for empathy and personal support
- The need for honesty

These needs are discussed in greater depth in the following sections.

The Need to Accurately See What Is Happening in the Classroom

In the early stages of teaching, many mentees are unable to see the big picture. They are often unaware of how (or if) students are learning and may not notice much of what is going on in their classroom because they are so focused on their own actions as the teacher. This limited vision inhibits their ability to reflect on interactions that create positive learning experiences. During the early stages, when mentees are learning how to become comfortable with the role of teacher, mentors need to reflect back to mentees what they see during their observation. Providing a description of what is going on during a lesson without qualifying it (i.e., that was right, that was wrong) is important.

Initially, mentors must provide mentees with a "mirror" to allow them to get an accurate image of their classroom. A video camera provides an exact image, but sometimes when viewing a tape mentees can only see themselves and their own actions, as opposed student response or interactions with students. In addition, new teachers may feel overwhelmed after viewing all the things happening in the classroom that are caught on tape. A more comfortable way of providing a mirror is for the mentor to reiterate what happened in the classroom. Accurate descriptions of the events, conversations, and behaviors observed in a classroom, without judgment or praise, are a powerful support for a mentee's learning. New teachers may not be aware of all that is going on in their classrooms. A written description lets them "see" their classroom interactions more closely. Specific methods for reflecting back what is seen in the classroom are given in Chapter 5, but initial, informal conversations about observations are a good starting point. The following dialogue gives mentors practice presenting neutral classroom observations to their mentees.

Scenario: Mirroring a Classroom

Review the following scenario, or role-play it with a colleague. When you are finished, use the questions following the role-play to give another mentor or a colleague a description of what you saw in a nonjudgmental way (using effective verbal and nonverbal skills as identified in Chapter 2). If you are working alone, write down your thoughts or use a tape recorder to capture your comments. Reread or listen to them after you have completed the task. Work to mirror what you saw and avoid making any qualifying remarks.

SETTING: 8th grade middle school language arts classroom

TEACHER: Okay, kids, we finished reading *The Outsiders* yesterday, so now I want you to get into groups and brainstorm ideas so you can write an essay on the theme. So why don't you find three other people and get into your groups. (Students begin pulling chairs across the room and calling out to friends to form groups. Some sit alone and look around. The teacher picks up a stack of papers.)

TEACHER: While you are getting yourselves together, I will hand out the form I want you to complete as you brainstorm. It's really easy, but all of you need to contribute to the group to get it done. Okay, okay, get in your groups now. Somebody needs to get together with Sammy, he's all by himself over there. (Teacher walks to the still-forming groups and hands out a form to every student.)

STUDENT: Do we all need to fill this out?

TEACHER: Yes, but you need to work together. (To the class) You will all need a brainstorming sheet to do the essay. Hey, quiet down—you're not babies and you should be able to get into groups without so much noise, for crying out loud! (Students finalize their groups and Sammy pulls his desk to the side of a group of three other students. A student raises her hand.)

TEACHER: Yes, Shondra?

SHONDRA: I don't get what you mean by brainstorming.

TEACHER: It's just a list of ideas that could be the focus of your writing. You have to have a thesis, you know, and this is a way to capture all of your ideas so you can narrow down your choices and determine the one that you want to write about. Remember that theme is what the author is trying to tell us in the book, the message. This form gives you a list of the characters and key events in the book to use as a springboard for your ideas—so get busy.

Dialogue: Observation

What did you hear in the scenario you read or heard? How would you mirror this teaching event back to the teacher without qualifying what occurred? Answer the following questions to practice reflecting back events.

When watching your class I saw . . .
When observing your class I heard . . .

Now share your comments with a colleague and discuss the differences between your statements.

Feedback to the previous scenario such as "You should have explained brainstorming before passing out the assignment," "This would work better," or "I always do it this way" does not allow novice teachers to see what is happening in the classroom. These types of comments indicate that a mentor is doing more than just mirroring what happened. Mentors also should be careful not to overwhelm their mentee by listing every area of concern from an observation. Mentors should select one particular area, such as the teacher's use of language in the dialogue above, and reflect back the actual statements used by the teacher. For example, the mentor might say, "I heard you say to the students that what they were going to do was easy, and another time you told them that 'they were not babies and should be able to get into groups without so much noise.'" The mentee may respond with an explanation of why something happened or an idea

about what he or she might need to do in the future. However, in the initial stages of teacher development mentors may need to be more directive to get mentees to reflect. Following up a reflected statement (such as the one in the example above) with a question such as "What do you think about that?" enables mentors to avoid making judgments about what they heard and prompts mentees to reflect. If mentees do not recognize areas where they need to be more direct, mentors need to use "I" messages. "I noticed that Carlie was drawing pictures during your explanation, and I wonder what you might do to address this" is an example of a direct statement that is not accusatory because it focuses on the observer's perspective. Even with direct statements, mentors need to use language that will not create defensiveness on the part of the mentee, and "I" messages can help.

Once mentees have reflected on their areas of development, mentors need to offer them some resources. In the situation outlined above, recommending a book about communication in the classroom or suggesting that the novice teacher visit a teacher who is savvy in classroom communications provides the novice with a way to gather information. Finally, mentors need to ask mentees what their plans are for addressing the issue. Accessing the resources is the first step, but mentees also need to identify specific steps they will take to improve in the area of concern. This process should be used on one or two concerns at a time. When mentors mirror all the negative things they see in their mentees' classrooms, their mentees can become overwhelmed, rendering the mirroring ineffective.

Mentors also need to mirror the positive things they see. For example, a positive reflection mentors could share from the scenario above is "I saw that you were using cooperative learning and had structured the activity with a form for the students to use." All reflections of classrooms activity need to include images of strength as well as areas of concern. Novice teachers cannot tackle four or five separate issues at a time. Mentors should focus on the most obvious or crucial issues, and then balance the reflection by identifying what went well in the lesson.

Mentors may use the Observation Note Form in Figure 3.2 as a tool to gather information during early observations. This form provides mentors with statements they can make and questions they can ask to foster reflection following an observation.

The Need for Guiding Questions

After mentors provide mentees with a description of what is happening in the classroom, it is hoped that they will recognize the need for some action or change. At this point mentees may specifically ask for help and guidance. Observations and questions that indicate that a mentee is aware that

Observation Note Form

Complete the mentor portion of the form, then share it with your mentee. Ask your mentee the designated questions, fill in the mentee's comments, and then ask the mentee what steps can be taken to address areas of concern and maintain positive areas.

Observation Notes
Mentor: _____ Date: _____
Mentee: _____ Class/grade: _____

When watching your class I saw . . .
(List one positive observation.)

What do you think about that?
(Fill in mentee response.)

When watching your class I saw . . .
(List one area of concern from the observation.)

What do you think about that?
(Fill in mentee response.)

When observing your class I heard . . .
(List one positive statement you heard.)

What do you think about that?
(Fill in mentee response.)

When observing your class I heard . . .
(List one statement you heard that might be a concern.)

What do you think about that?
(Fill in mentee response.)

Next Steps:

Figure 3.2

he or she must shift the focus to the students include "I could see that some of the students really didn't get it," "They really weren't listening to me, were they?" "How do I get them to listen to me?" and "How can I increase their ability to stay on task?" If mentees do not identify issues to address from the classroom reflection, mentors can ask guiding questions to help them consider the classroom interactions more thoughtfully. Questions that can help probe the mentee's awareness include "Why do you think this happened?" "What was your goal at this point?" and "What might have caused the students to respond that way?" The focus of questions is not about telling mentees what to do, but rather about helping them discover ways to improve their teaching and supporting their efforts to learn and grow. Although some mentees quickly move beyond the self-centered stage and begin to focus on their students, mentors need to continue to observe and reflect what they see to their mentees to support their growth.

If questions do not help to prompt a novice teacher's awareness of areas for growth, mentors must be more directive. One way to do this is to use role-plays. By asking mentees to role-play the student (or parent, administrator, or whoever), mentors can role-play how mentees might respond to a situation more effectively. For example, mentors can set up the role-play by asking the mentee to be the student or parent who was part of a problem. The mentee recreates the comments or actions that precipitated the incident or actions being discussed, and the mentor then role-plays the teacher and provides a response to the situation that reflects a more experienced and/or appropriate perspective.

This type of role-play provides mentees with examples of how they might change their behavior to match the response modeled by their mentors. It is a very direct way to give mentees guidance about how they should respond in a given situation. Debriefing after the role-play is important, as this asks mentees to identify what the mentor did that created a more positive outcome. By naming the mentors' behaviors as observed in the role-play, mentees identify specific behaviors they should be using. Another option is for a mentee to role-play him or herself in a situation where the mentor's role is that of angry parent or disruptive student (or whatever the area of concern may be) so the mentee can practice what he or she might say and do before facing the real situation. These opportunities are valuable and powerful learning tools.

Mentors can reflect on the following scenario in which a mentor is taking part in a classroom observation to practice asking guiding questions.

Scenario: Observation and Guiding Questions

Read this description of a lesson or have two colleagues role-play it, and look for areas upon which you think this novice teacher can focus her growth.

SETTING: Mary is teaching a track unit to her high school physical education class.

MARY: Okay, we are going to learn about how to do the high jump today.

STUDENT: Who cares about this stuff?

MARY: If you want to go out for track or watch a friend at a track meet, you need to understand how to successfully complete the high jump. I only have one high jump station, so this half of the class can do stretching exercises from our fitness plans while this half does the jump. (Mary divides the class, puts half of the students behind her, and tells them to practice stretches.)

MARY: (To the group at the bar) So your approach is at an angle, see, and you run up to the bar slowly. This isn't about speed, but energy. As you approach, you want to give a kick up, like you would kick a soccer ball, then arch backwards over the pole. (She demonstrates.) We will start with the pole low, and see how far you can get.

STUDENT: I can't do that!

MARY: Sure you can. (She lines up the other students and has them practice the jump, raising the bar each time.)

MARY: Good job! You should go out for track, Thomas! Why don't you watch Thomas do the jump? Okay. (Students in the jumping group watch Thomas jump, as do the other group. The stretching group sits around and talks about the weekend and plans for social activities. Mary gives feedback to each student after they jump and helps them improve their approach, takeoff, and jump.)

MARY: Okay, you each have gotten to jump several times, let's raise the bar now and see who can keep jumping as it gets higher. Tomorrow (speaking to the other group) you guys can go and this group will do the stretches.

Dialogue: Reflecting on Guiding Questions

Review the scenario above using the Observation Note Form (see Figure 3.2). Identify other things you heard or saw in the lesson. After you identify what you heard or saw, determine what types of questions you would ask your mentee to guide him or her to an awareness of what was going on in the class. Write down your thoughts to reflect on later or talk with another mentor to see if you have similar thoughts and ideas.

Scenario: Feedback Conversation

Now read or role-play the actual dialogue that occurred during the feedback conversation for the class described above. This conversation demonstrates the type of guiding questions a mentor might ask after observing this scenario.

MENTOR: Mary, all the students in the second group were able to complete the jump as you demonstrated—that was impressive for their first time.

MARY: Yeah, I think my demonstration was pretty good. I had to practice it a lot because I never did track myself.

MENTOR: I noticed that you divided the class into two groups—can you tell me about that?

MARY: Well, we were supposed to go outside where there are two stations for high jumping. I had planned to have both groups jumping at the same time. But it was raining, so we had to make due with the one station here in the gym. I wanted to do two groups at the same time, but this way I was able to really watch the one group and I gave them pretty specific feedback. I think I was able to note their errors and correct them pretty well. Like you said, all of them got over the bar at least once.

MENTOR: What about the other group?

MARY: Yeah, well, they were working on their stretches, which is part of our ongoing fitness plan.

MENTOR: How successful was this group in getting the stretching done?

MARY: Well, they seemed to be doing their stretches, I mean I know they would have rather been jumping too, but that just wasn't possible. Tomorrow they'll get their turn.

MENTOR: Is there any other way you could organize the jumping with one station so that two groups could go?

MARY: Well, I suppose I could. It just seemed like there would be so many students all waiting in line, and I thought they might not listen to me with everybody talking and stuff.

MENTOR: Do you ever have two groups do an activity and alternate—with one person from each group?

MARY: Oh, yeah I've done that with some games I've set up. I see how that would work—I didn't think about two groups because I had planned for one so I just went ahead with things basically the same way.

MENTOR: How would it have worked if you had alternated with two groups?

MARY: I guess that would have kept them all involved more, and I could have given the demonstration to all of the students—now I will have to repeat the entire lesson for the second group tomorrow. I think that the group that was supposed to be stretching was not all really doing the stretches, so if I had two groups and had them do the stretches while they were waiting their turn, at least they'd all be in front of me so I could see them.

MENTOR: I agree, those ideas would really strengthen your lesson. What will you do now?

MARY: Well, I guess I should give the second group their time to do the jump.

But I will at least have the stretching group over in front of me so that I can watch them tomorrow. The next time we do something in groups, I will have to figure out how to alternate them and try to keep everybody involved. And I guess I should think more carefully about a "Plan B" when I am teaching something that relies on going outdoors.

MENTOR: That sounds like a good plan!

Dialogue: Guiding Questions

After you are done reading the conversation, discuss it with another mentor, or reflect upon your ability to identify and reflect back to the mentee the things you heard and saw in the lesson. Identify whether or not you observed issues similar to those in the example. List the guiding questions you heard, then talk about your perception of the effectiveness of the guiding questions.

For some mentors, guiding questions come to mind easily. However, for others, it may take practice to let go of the need to tell mentees what to do and develop the ability to ask about what happened in a nonthreatening way (Canning 1991). Mentors can use the following types of sample questions and statements as a starting point for helping their mentees reflect on their teaching following an observation (see Figure 3.3).

Beginning Guiding Questions (for Post-Observation Conversation)

How do you feel about today's lesson?

How do you think it went today?

Did you accomplish what you set out to do today?

What were you expecting from today's lesson?

What have you been working on?

What can I help you with?

What in today's lesson would you like to talk about?

Figure 3.3

If these questions do not lead mentees to reflect upon the observation and areas for growth, mentors can move to the second level of questions (see Figure 3.4), which aim to extend a mentee's thinking and reflection by focusing more on areas that may need development.

Questions to Extend Mentee Thinking and Reflection

Tell me more about that.

Why do you think that happened?

What does the students' work tell you?

What about the students' behavior leads you to think that?

How else might you do that?

Figure 3.4

If a mentee still is not aware of what occurred in the classroom during the observation, or is aware of what occurred but is not sure how to change the situation, mentors can ask more direct questions, as demonstrated in the third category of questions (see Figure 3.5). These questions can help to direct the conversation toward areas of growth by showing the correlation between relationships or offering suggestions regarding areas of concern.

Question/Statements to Direct Mentee Reflection More Specifically

I wonder what would happen if you tried _____ (insert suggestion)?

What do you think would happen if you did _____ (insert suggestion)?

Does this _____ (insert mentee's action) relate to _____ (insert student behavior)?

How might _____ (insert mentee's action) affect _____ (insert students' behavior)?

Figure 3.5

The Need for an Action Plan and Resources

At times, novice teachers may be unable to recognize what to do to improve their teaching, even after mentors have provided them with specific statements and observations from classroom interactions and asked them guiding questions. Or, they may see the problem or concern, but be unsure of how to solve it. It is important that beginning teachers recognize that they are not expected to have all the answers, but that they can access resources to help develop their effectiveness and find answers. These resources can be used to develop an action plan to enable mentees to deal more effectively with the issue.

Mentors can also introduce resources using direct language (see Chapter 2) as a way to heighten a mentee's awareness of an issue they have previously neglected to see as an area of concern. Reading about a management process or specific examples of cooperative learning and then discussing the resources together can help mentees become more acutely aware of issues they did not previously see as concerns. For example, mentors who wish their mentees to plan and structure more carefully might bring in the Johnson and Johnson (1991) book *Joining Together* and ask their mentees to read a particular section. The mentor and mentee can then discuss the concepts referred to in the text, and the mentor can request that the mentee incorporate concepts such as individual and group accountability into their next cooperative learning lesson. Without an example, the mentee may not be able to conceptualize the mentor's requests or may not understand the need to incorporate the ideas described by the mentor. The resource adds another voice to the request for change, and provides examples beyond those the mentor can articulate. When mentors provide specific evidence via a resource, both the mentor and mentee have a common example upon which to base further conversation.

Once mentees are able to recognize individual student needs, they need support to plan ways to address these needs. Many novice teachers stall in their growth at this point, because although they recognize the need, they are not sure what to do about it. In this case, mentors must respond to the issues and concerns identified by mentees following an observation, and ask them how they plan to address the issue. This can be done after mentees have investigated the resources offered or while the resources are being read. Either way, it is vital that mentors help their mentees set up plans for addressing concerns. And, to be effective in this role, mentors need to be aware of new ideas and methodologies to suggest readings or workshops for mentees, and to be able to connect them with teachers whose classrooms reflect the skill they are striving to develop.

If mentors do not know what to do about an issue, it is even more imperative that they find the appropriate resources and develop a plan with their mentees. Often mentors simply need to connect their mentees with the individuals in a school system—the staff development director, the special education teacher, the school psychologist, fellow teachers—and teach them to use these human resources to support their own work in the classroom. Novice teachers cannot be left to wing it or to ignore a problem in their classroom. While mentors are not expected to know all the answers, being able to locate the appropriate resources is important. By doing so, mentors are conveying to beginning teachers that learning how to address all the learners in the classroom is an ongoing process, and thus are demonstrating the process of lifelong learning. If mentees feel that their mentors do not know what to do and as a result does nothing, they will also fall into a pattern of learned helplessness. Mentors who participate in a search for answers are modeling that finding answers to the needs posed by the students in a classroom is what good teachers do.

Once mentees convey to their mentors that they have seen the issue or problem but do not know what to do, or when mentors have determined that their mentees need some additional support to recognize and respond to an area of concern, an action plan needs to be created. An action plan can certainly be used at any time to identify specific goals, but it is especially important when mentees do not recognize how they need to modify or change their behavior. This document identifies resources to be shared, steps to be taken, and a timeline for completion. Running a classroom requires a great deal of work, and novice teachers may feel it is not a priority to set aside time to work on issues or concerns. An action plan sets up an expectation and goals for achieving continued learning in a particular area.

The action plan may focus on accessing resources, involve action research in the classroom, or ask the teacher to try a new strategy with particular students. The action plan should be developed and agreed upon by both the mentor and mentee, and can provide a focus for future observations and conferences. The Sample Action Plan (see Figure 3.6) provides mentors with guidelines they can follow when creating their own action plans.

This is a simple plan; more complex issues need more detailed plans. An action plan provides mentees with a concrete process to address their concerns—and helps them learn to take action to address the teaching and learning going on in their classrooms. Mentors can use the Sample Action Plan as a guide to become familiar with the components involved in creating action plans. In a real action plan situation, mentors share their ideas with their mentees and listen to their mentees' ideas to create a viable plan from the input of both parties.

Sample Action Plan

Issue: Mary, a student in a third-grade classroom, is constantly shouting out answers, talking out loud in class, and disturbing her classmates. Her fellow students do not want to include her in their play, so Mary forces her way into their games. A mentee has asked his mentor what to do about this situation, and they developed the following steps to solve the problem.

Steps:

1. Check Mary's file or talk to her first- and second-grade teachers to determine if this pattern occurred in previous years.
2. Read about attention-getting behaviors.
3. Talk to special education teacher.

*Complete by next week: _____ (date)

Based on information gathered:

4. Try behavior modification based on success of previous teacher.
5. Monitor behavior modification plan for success.
6. Keep data on number of times Mary disturbs class or playmates for _____ (days or weeks).

*Report data by: _____ (date)

Signed: _____ (mentor) _____ (mentee) _____(date)

Figure 3.6

Dialogue: Action Plan

A student in the classroom never completes or attempts any homework. The student is bright and does well in class. The mentee is frustrated and the student is failing because of this. What kind of action plan might you create in this situation? Develop a plan and share it with another mentor. Compare your ideas and consider what other possibilities might be included in the action plan. Use Figure 3.7 to develop your plan.

Practice Action Plan

Issue: Student doesn't do homework.

Steps:
1.
2.
3.
Complete by: _____ (date)

Based on information/resources:
4.
5.
6.
*Report data by: _____ (date)

Signed: _____ (mentor) _____ (mentee) _____ (date)

Figure 3.7

In the situation outlined in the previous dialogue, the mentor and mentee might come up with the following steps:

Step 1: Talk with the student's other teachers to determine if this is a pattern or if it is just occurring in this particular class.

Step 2: Talk with the parents to see if there are issues at home or if the parents are aware of the problem.

Step 3: Review homework assignments to see if there is a connection between the homework assignments and the ability of the student.

This work would be completed in the first week after the initial conference. If the mentee discovered that the student did complete her homework in other classes, the parents reported that the student complained that she was bored in class, and all homework assignments had been reinforcement and practice of skills that the student seemed to already possess, then the following steps would be put into place, based on this newly acquired information.

Step 4: Mentee identifies enrichment or extension opportunities for the student to engage in as homework.

Step 5: Mentee sets up a contract with the student, stating that if the student can demonstrate her understanding of the concept in question by writing a brief statement or through a brief conference after class, the mentee can then move on to step 6.

Step 6: Mentee asks the student what she would like to do to extend her learning in this particular subject or area, and assists the student in developing an independent study project for homework.

(The mentor should keep in mind that the follow-up steps are directly related to the information gathered regarding the situation. If another set of answers had been discovered—for example, if this was a high school student and the student was failing all classes and the parents were concerned about the student's possible experimentation with drugs or alcohol—then the follow-up steps would be completely different. The goal of the action plan is to gather evidence, and respond to that evidence appropriately.)

The Need for Empathy and Personal Support

New teachers move through several emotional states during their first year of teaching, from anticipation at starting their career to survival as the rapid pace of the school year begins. They may feel disillusioned throughout the school year when things do not go as well as they had envisioned. However, new teachers reach a state of rejuvenation as they move into the final months of the first school year, and with reflection to develop strategies for even more success in the future, they begin to anticipate the next year (Moir and Stobbe 1995). Student teachers pass through these similar stages in a more compressed time frame.

Mentors need to acknowledge the very real emotions their mentees experience. Empathy—the ability to relate to another person's emotional state—is extremely important in a mentoring relationship. Frustration, anxiety, exhaustion, and even fear may surface as novice teachers struggle to balance their personal lives with their new careers. Mentees may even become upset that they are experiencing these emotions. At this time mentors need to give their mentees permission to feel their emotions and not suppress them. However, mentors must maintain a balance and be careful that their feelings of empathy do not obscure their view of their mentees' work. Too much empathy can inhibit a mentor's ability to help a mentee identify and work on areas of concern.

Empathy can be best communicated through listening. Beginning teachers can communicate concerns and honest emotional reactions with a mentor they trust. Mentees need to be allowed to express their feelings without fear of being labeled as people who are unable to handle their job. At times, the mentor's silence and sympathetic ear is the only support the mentee needs.

Due to the wide range of emotions novice teachers experience during their first months in a classroom, attention must be paid to their emotional health and physical well-being, as well as to their academic development. Novice teachers need someone to provide them with personal support as they cope with the ups and downs of their initial work experience. Mentors need to act as sounding boards for their mentees' emotions, comforting

them and reflecting back to them the emotions they express. Although often the listening and reassurance provided by mentors may be enough to help mentees, other times guiding questions may be needed to help mentees problem solve ways to deal with their emotions. For example, if mentees talk about how frustrating it is to get students to move from one activity to another, mentors can ask them if they want to work on their transitions, and this can be the first step in an action plan dealing with transitions. Emotional outpouring is often the beginning of recognizing a need for change, and mentors can support their mentees by listening to their emotions.

Mentors also may need to give their mentees permission to let go of some things or reprioritize their life and work. In their drive to be successful, some novice teachers fail to take care of their personal lives or their health. Mentors need to be observant and listen for signs that their mentees are not making time for life outside the classroom. Mentors can encourage mentees to maintain hobbies, exercise, and relationships, that provide them with emotional balance. Balance is key, and mentees need to devote sufficient time and energy to the classroom and their other interests.

Mentors have several options to help address a mentee's emotional needs. One option is for mentors to bring in another mentor to observe and conference with the mentee. This can help the mentee hear the mentor's cautions about keeping his or her life balanced, because another mentor is voicing the same concerns. It also may be helpful for mentors to find ways to connect the mentee with other teachers who are at the same point in their careers. A study group or seminar for mentees can be a way of allowing novice teachers to share their experiences and learn from one another. This can be done within each school, or mentors within a district can bring all their mentees together. Providing opportunities for their mentees to share their feelings about the fears, frustration, and fatigue that usually accompany an initial teaching experience is especially important for mentors who find that being empathetic is not a natural emotional response. These opportunities can be given at a seminar, where novice teachers can learn from, share with, and provide support for each other.

The following role-play demonstrates dialoguing between a mentor and a mentee when the mentee is experiencing emotional stress. This role-play can be used as an example of how mentors can provide emotional support to their mentees.

Scenario: Providing Emotional Support

Your mentee has been fighting a cold for several weeks and has been out sick for a few days. When she returns, her energy level is still low. She expresses frustration at the amount of time it takes her to plan and prepare for her lessons, which cuts into the sleep and rest time she knows would help her get, and stay, healthy. Write out your ideas about what you might say to this mentee *before* you read the dialogue below.

MENTOR: So you were out sick for a few days, I hear.

MENTEE: Yeah, I had that flu that's going around. I usually never get sick. I can't believe that this is the second time in two months that I've had to stay home!

MENTOR: It's really hard to think about school and stay on top of lessons when you don't feel well. Teaching is hard enough to do when you're feeling one hundred percent! Do you think there's any reason why you've been sick more recently?

MENTEE: Well, I can't help but feel that the students bring in all of their germs and share them with me! And I have to admit I feel sort of stressed out at times.

MENTOR: Like I said, teaching is hard work—both emotionally and physically. It's hard to avoid getting sick when you feel run down. Are you taking vitamins and getting enough rest so you can fight off all those germs you encounter?

MENTEE: How can I ever get enough rest when it takes so long to plan for all my lessons?

MENTOR: It is easy to get run down when you have the stress of a new work experience as well as cold and flu season to contend with. I know it's hard, but you need to carve out some time for yourself, so you can stay healthy. What do you do for relaxation or to unwind?

MENTEE: Well, I used to go to the health club a lot, but I haven't gotten there in months.

MENTOR: What did you used to do there?

MENTEE: I liked to use the weight machines and do a little jogging around the track.

MENTOR: That sounds like just the thing to get rid of any stress and keep your energy level up. What if you planned to take forty-five minutes on your way home from school each night to stop in and get in a quick workout?

MENTEE: I feel like I have so much to do.

MENTOR: But you get less done when you get sick and have to miss days of school.

MENTEE: Yeah, I suppose you're right. I could make a little time, I guess. I just need to write it in my schedule book, along with all the other stuff I have to do!

MENTOR: That would be great. It's important to find balance in your life. You'll enjoy your students and have more energy to plan and engage in the learning when you feel healthy.

Dialogue: Emotional Support

After reading or hearing the dialogue, review what you wrote, indicating how you would respond to the mentee. Discuss with a colleague or write down how your own ideas were similar or different from the example. Then, role-play your own ideas with a colleague or another partner to practice using language that is emotionally supportive.

Mentors can use support statements as a starting point for conversation if they are unsure of what to say when a mentee is at an emotional impasse. The support statements and questions listed in Figure 3.8 provide mentees with validation and affirmation of the emotions they are feeling, thus allowing them to recognize their needs and develop plans to solve them. The support statements and questions acknowledge the difficulties of the job and help mentees identify ways they can alleviate their stress.

Support Statements and Questions for Responding to Emotions

You can do it, you just need more time.

Everyone develops his/her skills at a different pace.

All learners, including teacher-learners, learn in different ways.

What do you think your strengths are?

What are you doing to release your tensions/stress?

Trying new methods is scary, but you will get more comfortable with _____ (insert method) as you use it more.

Taking risks is never easy, but I will help you.

Change is hard.

You seem to be feeling _____ (insert emotion), is that right?

What do you think is causing you to feel _____ (insert emotion)?

What are you doing to keep yourself healthy during this often stressful time?

Figure 3.8

The Need for Honesty

Beginning teachers need to be given an honest appraisal of their work. As mentioned before, it is not helpful for mentors to overwhelm novice teachers with numerous areas of concern at one time. However, it's equally as damaging for mentors to avoid describing problem areas. Mentors who understand the difficulties teachers face in the classroom and who have developed strong positive relationships with their mentees may feel uncomfortable pointing out negative aspects of their mentees' practice. However, if honest, exact descriptions are provided in a nonjudgmental way, mentees can learn from the experience and strengthen their skills. By failing to point out an area of concern, mentors place mentees in a situation where they continue practices that are ineffective or even harmful to students.

As mentioned earlier, if mentors mirror classroom observations and ask guiding questions and the novice is still unaware of the area of concern, mentors need to be more directive and articulate their concern using specific, nonjudgmental language. Once mentees are aware of problems, action plans should be developed. If action plans are implemented but the problems continue, mentors need to provide mentees with evidence of the lack of change and question them as to what might be impeding their ability to work in this particular area. This should be done when mentors do not see mentees implementing action plans, or when mentees' action plans do not produce the desired results. Mentors must talk honestly with their mentees, or they will not understand what is behind the mentee's inability to solve the problem. This lack of understanding could create negative feelings about their work with their mentee.

If mentees cannot articulate why they are unable to effectively address a concern and complete the action plan, mentors need to consider other options. If the issue is significant, mentors might consider bringing in another mentor to provide additional evidence and ideas for the mentee. Mentors can honestly tell their mentees that it would be helpful to get another perspective to help them view things more clearly. This will allow mentors to bring in other individuals without making mentees feel like they are being ganged up on.

Mentors also might determine that the issue can be identified for ongoing work. This would be the case if the issue pertains to a sophisticated student need that the mentee is not developmentally ready to address yet. Any skill that novice teachers have yet to master should be considered for ongoing work. The mentor and mentee must decide that the mentee will continue to focus on that issue, and the mentor may need to provide the mentee with an extended amount of time for continued effort. By allowing time for continued effort and setting up long-range goals, mentors validate

the time and effort needed for ongoing teacher development. No one develops all their skills in the first years of teaching. Good teachers always set goals for themselves, and mentors can help novice teachers develop this habit by identifying areas for ongoing work.

Mentors can use the sample planning form in Figure 3.9 as a guide for long-range goal planning for mentees.

Mentors can use the template in Figure 3.10 to develop long-range plans with their mentees. Long-range plans are useful when mentees need additional time to complete their goal.

While many mentoring programs do not go beyond one year, some districts provide for ongoing connections between mentors and mentees during the second and third year of the novice teacher's employment, aiding the success of long-range goal planning for mentees. Even if mentees do not have a specific area of concern, setting up long-range goals can aid the development of beginning teachers by serving as a reinforcement for the need for continual learning. Working and conversing with a peer who is also relatively new to teaching, or self-monitoring through the use of reflective journaling also can be helpful in addressing long-range plans.

Although mentors need to determine what to do when they feel their mentees are not meeting identified expectations, they also need to be realistic in their expectations for their mentees' learning. Few novice teachers are able to perfect all aspects of their practice in their initial teaching experience. This means that mentors may need to reconsider their view of what a novice teacher can accomplish in his or her first year. If mentees are reflecting on their work, asking questions, and seeking ways to improve, they are providing a very significant indicator of their future success.

If mentors have serious concerns about their mentees' behavior and/or dedication to their work, they must talk to their mentees about these issues. Outside intervention may be needed if the mentor strongly believes that his or her mentee needs to address a particular issue or has inappropriate philosophical perspectives for the context of the school, and the mentee has not exhibited any positive behavior change to meet these long-term goals. For example, if a mentor has identified the need for a mentee to generate more specific lesson plans, and despite an action plan, conversations, and the creation of long-term goals the mentee continues to come to class without any written plans, outside intervention would be warranted. Mentees who exhibit behavior that suggests that they are not serious about improving their teaching skills or that they are unwilling to put in the time and effort necessary to improve, need to hear that this behavior impedes their ability to be a successful teacher. Mentors often find this task to be extremely difficult, but they must remember that mentees have a responsibility to fulfill their role as learners.

Creating a Long-Range Plan

Review the following *example* of a long-range plan and discuss your reactions to developing such a plan with another mentor or reflect on them by yourself.

Long-Range Goals

Mentee: *Steve Hansen* Class: *8th grade English*

Mentor: *Emily Shields* Date: *10/21/99*

1. *Identify the issue:* The mentee is working on varying his forms of assessment. Paper-and-pencil unit tests on literature are the mentee's most comfortable format. Some students are not very successful with these assessments, yet they contribute well in class discussions of the literature. Mentor and mentee identified that additional or alternative methods of assessment should be investigated.
2. *Briefly describe the action plan already in place:* Mentee was to read some articles recommended by the mentor on performance assessment. Mentee was to observe teachers using performance assessment and review student work from those tasks. Mentee was to devise a performance assessment for students to complete at the end of the next assigned novel, *Flowers for Algernon.*
3. *Identify work mentee has completed as a part of the action plan:* Mentee completed the readings and discussed performance assessment with the mentor. Students were asked to complete a book review after completing the novel, following class discussion. The book review was the mentee's response to developing performance assessment. Student work reflected students' awareness of the plot of the book and the main characters. The mentee felt that the book review provided similar information to the paper-and-pencil test, but that the circumstances (the students were allowed to complete the report at home) might have provided the students with opportunities for outside assistance. The ability for students to articulate, in their own words, the key concepts from the book would be an example of performance assessment. The mentor might suggest that next time the review be written in class, and that the mentee define expectations for the book review.
4. *Outside mentor's observations:* Conversations with the mentee involved discussion regarding the mentee's ideas about the purpose of the assessment and the purpose of having students read the book. It is clear that the mentee is committed to ensuring that the students read and understand the novel. The mentee's determination of understanding is that the student can identify key events and characters and the author's intent (theme). Teacher-directed class discussions and quizzes over each assigned chapter are also used to determine understanding.
5. *Long-term goals for continued learning in this area:* Both assigned mentor and outside mentor recommend that the mentee complete the following tasks:
   a) The mentee will continue to read about performance assessment and observe other teachers using this assessment format.
   b) Within the next year, the district will be requiring that portfolios of student work be passed on to high school teachers, and collections of assessments will need to

Figure 3.9

be included. With this in mind, the mentee needs to develop at least one specific performance assessment, along with the purpose for the assessment and grading guidelines, for all readings taught during the rest of this year.

c) The mentee will sign up for the district's workshop on assessment that will be held this summer.

d) The mentee will set up times to plan with the other eighth grade English teachers in order to utilize their expertise.

6. *Time frame estimated for goal completion:*

- Readings (see list below) will be completed by *12/15/99*.
- Observations of *Ms. Sokol and Mr. Morman* (list teachers to be observed) will be completed by the end of the school year by the mentee.
- Performance assessments for all reading assignments will be given to the mentor when students receive them.
- Summer workshop will be attended during the next summer.
- Planning with the rest of the eighth grade teachers will take place during the next school year.
- Mentor will informally keep in contact with the mentee during the second year of teaching to follow up on these goals.

Suggested Readings:

Portfolios and Performance Assessment: Helping Students Evaluate Their Progress as Readers and Writers, by Roger Farr and Bruce Tone.

Authentic Assessment: A Guide to Implementation by Cheryl Fulton Fischer and Rita M. King.

Communicating Student Learning: 1996 ASCD Yearbook, published by the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Figure 3.9 (continued)

Long-Range Plans

Complete this framework to identify ongoing goals.

1. Identify the issue:

2. Briefly describe the action plan already in place:

3. Identify work the mentee has completed as a part of the action plan:

4. Outside mentor's observations:

5. Long-term goals for continued learning in this area:

6. Time frame estimated for goal completion:

Figure 3.10

SkyLight Professional Development

When outside intervention is warranted, the supervisor usually gets involved in the process. For student teachers, this is the college supervisor, and for first-year teachers, this may be the director of the mentoring program or the staff development director. Mentors must remember that the trust between the mentor and mentee will be irrevocably destroyed if the mentor conveys his or her concerns to the mentee's evaluator. This is why, in all mentoring situations, it is helpful for mentors to bring in an administrator who is not directly evaluating the mentee. An administrator or staff person can be very frank with novice teachers and let them know that if they wish to continue to teach in that district/school they will need to work to develop their skills in the area of concern.

A principal from another building or a dean of students who is not involved in decisions about retaining staff at the mentee's school might be brought in to provide an outside or unofficial evaluation. These individuals are the most appropriate choices for an outside evaluator. Their suggestions, reflective of what typical administrators are looking for during the evaluation process, might bear more weight than a mentor's or other administrator's comments.

This type of intervention is based on the premise that the mentor's concern is valid and that the mentee has failed to address the concern or is unable to do so. If the mentor has an inaccurate view of the importance of some aspect of teaching, the outside intervention and/or outside evaluation will point that out. In some situations mentors become so fixated on a particular aspect of their mentees' development that they fail to see the big picture and obsess about a singular teaching task. Outside intervention can also clarify whether an issue is indeed as major a concern as the mentor thinks it is. When mentoring has broken down to the point where outside intervention is needed, the effectiveness of the interaction will be severely crippled. In this case, a new mentor with an unbiased perspective may need to be assigned as the mentee continues his or her work.

The situations outlined in the following dialogue are examples of cases that might lead to outside intervention.

Dialogue: Working through an Impasse

Read the following situations and reflect for a few moments, or role-play the scenarios with another mentor. Follow up by discussing (or writing) your thoughts on the questions that follow.

- A mentee believes that classrooms must be absolutely silent for learning to take place. Even when following an action plan that involves class projects and readings on active learning, the mentee constantly reprimands students for creating any noise.
- A mentee believes that learning can only take place through self-directed learning and does not provide any instruction for the students, even after reading and discussing various learning styles and noting the poor quality of student work.
- A mentee uses a disdainful tone and demeaning language with the students in the classroom. When tape recorded, she seems unable to recognize how her language is impacting the students.

When considering your response to the situations listed above, keep in mind the processes that have been discussed in this chapter. These are cases where mentors have tried options already, and are at the point where they need to be very directive. Think about the language you would use, and the examples and processes you might engage in to move the mentee beyond this impasse. There are no right answers, but as a mentor, you need to consider how you would use every interaction and tool available to you to communicate your concerns and offer direction to the mentee.

Questions for Further Thinking

1. What are the big issues for you as a mentor that you would not compromise on and that you feel might require outside intervention?
2. How would you proceed in your relationship with a mentee who held these beliefs?
3. Who would you go to in your school/district for outside intervention? How would you facilitate outside intervention or evaluation?

Very few mentoring situations reach the impasse where outside intervention is needed. There are processes a mentor can follow to create opportunities for a mentee's success, and every novice teacher has the ability to learn and grow. Mentors must believe in the power of supportive learning and work to help mentees move forward, even if the steps mentees take are small. The goal is to help novices develop into effective educators, and if mentors use the processes discussed in this book, they can address all the diverse needs that novice teachers bring to the classroom. These processes include the following:

- Providing evidence of classroom interactions (both positives and concerns)
- Using nonjudgmental language
- Providing opportunities for mentees to reflect on their work
- Providing guiding questions
- Being supportive and empathetic, yet honest

- Being direct when necessary
- Providing resources
- Setting up action plans to address areas for further growth
- Honestly communicating concerns and issues
- Setting up long-term goals for ongoing learning
- Using outside intervention after reaching an impasse

The needs of student teachers are very similar to the needs of first-year teachers as identified in this chapter, and their mentors should try to meet all of the needs listed above. However, student teachers often feel the added pressure of having their mentors also serve as their evaluators. Sometimes this leads to mentees feeling that someone is always looking over their shoulder. Student teacher mentors must allow mentees to develop their own styles, even if these are different from their own. This is challenging for the mentor, as he or she will need to address the effects of changes in teaching style, methods, or procedures within his or her own classroom when the student teacher leaves. Because of this, some mentors/cooperating teachers are reluctant to fully support their mentees' development if it means there might be some disruption to the flow they have established in their classrooms.

However, to develop professional skills, mentees need to make curricular decisions and reflect on the resulting student response. Mentors can take a more direct approach during the first days of student teaching, but they need to provide mentees with opportunities to make decisions on their own. Without opportunities to develop their decision-making skills, reflect on their choices, and monitor and adjust, the student teachers become dependent on others to tell them what to do. The first year of teaching following a student teaching experience is more successful when the novice is allowed to take on all the duties of the classroom teacher with full support from his or her cooperating teacher.

Although it is important that student teachers be placed in the role of teacher, they need to be placed in this role in a minor way at the beginning of their experience. Team teaching is an excellent way for mentors to provide student teachers with a gradual induction. As the weeks progress, student teachers are given more responsibility—adding classes and subject areas until they are handling all teaching responsibilities. As the student teaching semester draws to a close, student teachers can slowly "hand back" classes to mentor teachers, so that the cooperating teachers/mentors can acclimate students to any inverse changes. A specific daily schedule for conferences is also vital to the support of student teachers. Student teachers need much more interaction with mentors than do first-year teachers,

and if mentors do not keep up with daily discussions, the performance of student teachers can suffer.

Student teachers have another special need—the substantial concern of obtaining their first job. The letter of recommendation from the cooperating teacher/mentor weighs heavily on their minds, causing them to be hesitant to ask questions or try things that might expose their perceived ignorance. Mentors who offer support and advice in the areas of job searching and interviewing skills can help to ease their mentees' minds. By keeping these additional needs in mind, mentors can successfully support the ongoing learning of their student teachers/mentees.

At the opposite spectrum of the student teacher who is engaging in his or her first teaching experience is the experienced teacher who is implementing new curricular ideas, trying new teaching methodologies, or adapting to new assessment techniques. These new teaching experiences can put an experienced teacher back at the starting block. Experienced teachers can benefit from the support and guidance of mentors who aid them in implementing these new activities. However, experienced teachers need to decide for themselves if they want to participate in a mentoring program. Any attempt to force a mentoring system onto an established faculty member will probably be met with resistance. Offering mentors as a support device—in the role of a confidential, nonevaluative guide-on-the-side to new methodologies—is a key component to providing this service for experienced teachers.

It is important that mentors ensure confidentiality and recognize and build on the expertise of seasoned educators. The same guidelines that are used with novice teachers—using nonjudgmental language, guiding questions, and offering opportunities to read and discuss ideas—apply to veteran educators as well. In this situation it is also helpful if mentors work to connect new ideas to practices teachers are currently utilizing to validate teachers' work. This makes it easier for many teachers to adopt the innovation for which they are receiving support.

Most importantly, when working with veteran teachers, mentors need to be respectful of the history and years of wisdom that these educators bring to the classroom. It takes time to change gears and do something differently, and mentors need to allow time for these mentees to gradually develop their comfort level and expertise over time. Mentors who work with experienced teachers often receive the benefit of reciprocal learning as mentor and mentee develop their skills together.

Chapter 4

The Mentor's Lens

The goal of a mentor's classroom observation is to provide the novice teacher with a view of the teaching and learning interactions that occur. This allows the mentee to reflect upon his or her work and identify areas for improvement. Based on their own teaching styles, mentors may focus on some areas of mentees' instruction more than others. Thus, it is important that mentors and mentees know up front what lens—what areas the mentor is focusing on in the observation—is being used to view the classroom. Without a defined focal point, the mentor may miss some of what is happening in the novice teacher's instructional practices or give too much credence to a particular activity.

Organizing Teaching and Learning Through a Lens

Many states have defined a particular set of standards for new teachers, and these standards act as a lens for viewing teaching practices. Many mentors use their state or district's standards as a lens for observation. If there are no such standards available, mentors can select alternate standards or develop some to use with their mentees. Some mentoring

programs develop their own standards for their particular settings. What is most important is that a lens is chosen. Without a lens to provide the shared understanding of what is important for effective teaching, a mentoring relationship may become unfocused and unproductive.

There are several instruments that are available for use as a lens. Most of these have similar components. Mentors need to be familiar with these components and consider how they describe the novice teacher's efforts in each area. Rather than randomly gathering evidence of classroom interactions, mentors can use an instrument as a lens to focus their selection of evidence and help mentees identify areas for growth. Together, mentor and mentee can identify which aspects of the lens the mentor will focus on during a particular observation.

As time progresses, mentors may need to use guiding questions to help mentees see components of the lens they have not yet addressed in their teaching. If a mentee is resistant to a mentor's suggestions, a well-defined lens can give credence to the mentor's recommendations for growth. A lens also allows mentors to observe their mentees from a balanced perspective, even if their mentees' teaching style is different than their own.

Mentors and mentees need to come to a common understanding about the lens used to observe a classroom. For example, if a district is using a particular model, it is imperative that mentors reflect the district's language and emphasis in their interactions with mentees by using the appropriate model, or lens, in their observations. If a mentee is not developmentally ready for the detail and specificity implicit in a particular model, the mentor can help his or her mentee develop a higher level of awareness regarding the language and processes implicit in the model by discussing the language and providing examples of teaching that reflects the model. Mentors can do this by providing mentees with opportunities to observe teachers who effectively integrate the knowledge and skills indicated in the model, and then discussing the strategies used by that particular teacher. A follow-up to this activity would be that the mentee attempts to replicate some of the same processes. Or, mentors can initially select a model, or lens, that is more appropriate for the mentee's level of learning. Mentees need to understand the organizational structure used to view their work, which may require some additional conversation and sharing of resources (the text of the lens) prior to observation.

Although mentors have traditionally focused their attention on the classroom, where the teacher's work is most apparent, the teacher's planning creates effective teaching and learning. Positive, supportive interactions in the classroom do not happen randomly—teachers have to thought-

fully consider how to create a climate conducive to learning. In addition, the work a teacher does beyond the classroom has a huge impact on their effectiveness: connecting with parents, working with colleagues, and continuing his or her learning are also important aspects of being a good teacher. Thus, mentors need to look at their mentees' planning practices and professional interactions as well as what happens in the classroom.

Currently, nationally known instruments ask the user to provide evidence of a teacher's work in four broad areas: planning, instruction, classroom interactions, and professionalism. Some of the options available include the following models. All of these lenses identify what novice teachers should know and be able to do, but none of these specify the exact method that must be used to carry out the practice.

PATHWISE

The PATHWISE model was developed by Educational Testing Service (ETS) and came out of the work on the PRAXIS series of tests developed for states to use in licensing teachers. PATHWISE is a nonlicensing evaluation training and assessment program available from ETS (1995) that evolved from PRAXIS III, an assessment of classroom practices. The PATHWISE model comprises four domains, which are outlined in Figures 4.1–4.4.

The formative observation form for PATHWISE includes the criteria listed. Domains B and C are observed during actual classroom time, while domains A and D are observed during conversations with the teacher. During an observation, mentors are to gather evidence of teacher behaviors that identify mentees' work in each domain and subdomain.

Domain A (see Figure 4.1) includes components of teacher planning, as they relate to the students and the content. This domain covers areas such as teacher interaction with students and how this interaction affects student learning.

Domain A—Organizing Content Knowledge for Student Learning

A1—Becoming familiar with relevant aspects of students' background knowledge and experiences

A2—Articulating clear learning goals for the lesson that are appropriate for the students

A3—Demonstrating an understanding of the connections between the content that was learned previously, the current content, and the content that remains to be learned in the future

A4—Creating or selecting teaching methods, learning activities, and instructional materials or other resources that are appropriate for the students and that are aligned with the goals of the lesson

A5—Creating or selecting evaluation strategies that are appropriate for the students and that are aligned with the goals of the lesson

From PATHWISE™ Formative Observation Form. © 1995 by Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ. Used with permission from Educational Testing Service.

Figure 4.1

Domain B (see Figure 4.2) is focused on classroom climate as it relates to student learning and creating a positive environment.

Domain B—Creating an Environment for Student Learning

B1—Creating a climate that promotes fairness

B2—Establishing and maintaining rapport with students

B3—Communicating challenging learning expectations to each student

B4—Establishing and maintaining consistent standards of classroom behavior

B5—Making the physical environment as safe and conducive to learning as possible

From PATHWISE™ Formative Observation Form. © 1995 by Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ. Used with permission from Educational Testing Service.

Figure 4.2

Domain C (see Figure 4.3) deals with teaching to enhance student learning, including making students aware of learning goals and monitoring student learning to make changes where necessary.

Domain C—Teaching for Student Learning

C1—Making learning goals and instructional procedures clear to students

C2—Making content comprehensible to students

C3—Encouraging students to extend their thinking

C4—Monitoring students' understanding of content through a variety of means, providing feedback to students to assist learning, and adjusting learning strategies as the situation demands

C5—Using instructional time effectively

From PATHWISE™ Formative Observation Form. © 1995 by Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ. Used with permission from Educational Testing Service.

Figure 4.3

Domain D (see Figure 4.4) is geared towards professionalism, with an emphasis on reflection and collaboration with colleagues and parents/guardians.

Domain D—Teacher Professionalism

D1—Reflecting on the extent to which the learning goals were met

D2—Demonstrating a sense of efficacy

D3—Building professional relationships with colleagues to share teaching insights and to coordinate learning activities for students

D4—Communicating with parents or guardians about student learning

From PATHWISE™ Formative Observation Form. © 1995 by Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ. Used with permission from Educational Testing Service.

Figure 4.4

The training and assessment offered by PATHWISE is designed to create stable guidelines mentors can use to clearly and consistently see evidence of beginning teachers' work in the four domains. Training is offered via the use of videotaped teaching episodes. Mentors observe and gather evidence, then compare their findings. Repeated practice and conversation helps PATHWISE observers develop a high level of reliability in gathering solid evidence. All the domains listed are considered equally important for effective teaching, and the criteria within each domain are measurable against rubrics developed for PATHWISE. Mentors who use PATHWISE as

a lens engage in a common set of experiences in their training that help them view the classroom with a focus on these particular domains.

ETS defines PATHWISE as a formative tool, and specifically states on the observation form that PATHWISE is not to be used in decisions about personnel. This caution is noteworthy, as mentors need to constantly guard against inquisitive supervisors who try to use mentors to gather information about beginning teachers. All data collected by the mentor must remain confidential. Mentees can choose to share this information and include it in a portfolio or evaluation conference with a supervisor, but mentors should not disclose any information to supervisors that may be used for evaluation.

A Framework for Teaching

Charlotte Danielson worked on the PRAXIS project for ETS, and has written a book, *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching* (1996), describing a framework for teaching that also can be used as a lens to observe beginning teachers. Similar to PATHWISE, Framework identifies four key components of professional practice.

Danielson encourages educators to reflect on their practice using the Framework for Teaching competencies. This model is intended for observation of all teachers, not just beginners, so the components of professional practice in this model include more detail and specific descriptors than those in PATHWISE, enabling mentors to look even more closely at their mentees' work.

The Framework identifies the components that should be found in effective, professional teaching practice. Because they evolved from the early work on the PRAXIS tests, both PATHWISE and The Framework for Teaching have similar expectations. Descriptions of teacher behaviors that exemplify these expectations are available in Danielson's book, and ETS offers PATHWISE training materials that discuss expectations. When a more detailed model, such as this one, is used with the novice teacher, initial conversations may need to be more general and focus on the main concepts. The specifics of the subcomponents can be addressed later through action plans and long-range goals.

The Framework model's domains and related components are listed in Figures 4.5–4.9. Observers are to gather evidence that identifies the novice teacher's skill in each component and subcomponent.

Domain 1 (see Figures 4.5) includes components of professional practice, which include knowledge of content, students, and resources.

Domain 1: Planning and Preparation

Component 1a: Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy

- Knowledge of content
- Knowledge of prerequisite relationships
- Knowledge of content-related pedagogy

Component 1b: Demonstrating Knowledge of Students

- Knowledge of characteristics of age group
- Knowledge of students' varied approaches to learning
- Knowledge of students' skills and knowledge
- Knowledge of students' interests and cultural heritage

Component 1c: Selecting Instructional Goals

- Value
- Clarity
- Suitability for diverse students
- Balance

Component 1d: Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources

- Resources for teachers
- Resources for students

Component 1e: Designing Coherent Instruction

- Learning activities
- Instructional materials and resources
- Instructional groups
- Lesson and unit structure

Component 1f: Assessing Student Learning

- Congruence with instructional goals
- Criteria and standards
- Use for planning

Used with permission from Charlotte Danielson. From *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching* by Charlotte Danielson, pp. 3–4, figure 1.1. Published in 1996 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Figure 4.5

Domain 2 (see Figure 4.6) includes creating a well-managed and organized classroom that supports student learning, including creating a positive environment and managing classroom procedures and student behavior.

Domain 2: The Classroom Environment

Component 2a: Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport

- Teacher interaction with students
- Student interaction

Component 2b: Establishing a Culture for Learning

- Importance of the content
- Student pride in work
- Expectations for learning and achievement

Component 2c: Managing Classroom Procedures

- Management of instructional groups
- Management of transitions
- Management of materials and supplies
- Performance of non-instructional duties
- Supervision of volunteers and paraprofessionals

Component 2d: Managing Student Behavior

- Expectations
- Monitoring of student behavior
- Response to student misbehavior

Component 2e: Organizing Physical Space

- Safety and arrangement of furniture
- Accessibility to learning and use of physical resources

Used with permission from Charlotte Danielson. From *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching* by Charlotte Danielson, pp. 3–4, figure 1.1. Published in 1996 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Figure 4.6

Domain 3 (see Figure 4.7) includes components that pertain to aspects of teaching and learning, such as how teachers communicate, what techniques they use to engage students, and how they interact with and provide feedback to students.

Domain 3: Instruction

Component 3a: Communicating Clearly and Accurately

- Directions and procedures
- Oral and written language

Component 3b: Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques

- Quality of questions
- Discussion techniques
- Student participation

Component 3c: Engaging Students in Learning

- Representation of content
- Activities and assignments
- Grouping of students
- Instructional materials and resources
- Structure and pacing

Component 3d: Providing Feedback to Students

- Quality: accurate, substantive, constructive, and specific
- Timeliness

Component 3e: Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness

- Lesson adjustment
- Response to students
- Persistence

Used with permission from Charlotte Danielson. From *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching* by Charlotte Danielson, pp. 3–4. Published in 1996 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Figure 4.7

Domain 4 (see Figure 4.8) includes components that concern the professional duties related to teaching, such as professional development, monitoring student progress, and communicating with parents/guardians.

Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities

Component 4a: Reflecting on teaching

- Accuracy
- Use in future teaching

Component 4b: Maintaining Accurate Records

- Student completion of assignments
- Student progress in learning
- Non-instructional records

Component 4c: Communicating with Families

- Information about the instructional program
- Information about individual students
- Engagement of families in the instructional program

Component 4d: Contributing to the School and District

- Relationships with colleagues
- Service to the school
- Participation in school and district projects

Component 4e: Growing and Developing Professionally

- Enhancement of content knowledge and pedagogical skill
- Service to the profession

Component 4f: Showing Professionalism

- Service to students
- Advocacy
- Decision-making

Used with permission from Charlotte Danielson. From *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching* by Charlotte Danielson, pp. 3–4 figure 1.1. Published in 1996 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Figure 4.8

INTASC

The Council of Chief State School Officers (1992) has developed the *Model Standards for Beginning Teacher Licensing and Development: A Resource for State Dialogue.* These standards, commonly referred to as the INTASC (Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium) Standards, are model standards for preservice teachers that identify what student teachers should know and be able to do after the completion of their student teaching experience. The INTASC standards have been incorporated into standards-based teacher certification programs in numerous states, and are aligned with the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). INTASC defines ten principles that comprise the standards for beginning teachers. These principles are designed to be a guide for all educational programs for novice teachers. These also can serve as a lens for mentors to observe all novice educators, as perfecting these beginning standards is often an appropriate goal for first-year teachers as well as student teachers. If mentors find the specificity of other models too overwhelming for their initial work with their mentees, the INTASC standards (see Figure 4.9) might be particularly helpful. During an observation, mentors are to gather evidence of the mentee's ability to meet each principle.

Using INTASC as a lens provides mentors with a starting point for creating a big picture of beginning teachers' work. Another model can be used in addition to INTASC to look at the details more closely, or mentors and mentees can develop a means to explore in-depth one of the principles to provide a more specific focus. INTASC's principles parallel the domains of PATHWISE and the components of Framework, using another set of words to identify what a beginning teacher should know and be able to do.

Dimensions of Learning

Some districts have embraced a broader and more detailed model for organizing teaching and learning. *Dimensions of Learning Teachers' Manual* (Marzano, et al. 1992) is one such model, and it, too, provides a detailed lens by which a mentor may look into a mentee's classroom.

Dimensions of Learning, due to its goal of focusing classroom interactions on higher-level learning, offers another way of looking at classroom interactions. Published by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), *Dimensions of Learning* provides a more detailed set of criteria to identify effective teaching behaviors. Books and training sessions offered by ASCD are available to assist in teachers' understanding and use of the Dimensions model. However, Dimensions focuses on expanding student learning and does not address teacher professionalism

INTASC Principles

Principle #1:
Teacher understands central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structure of the discipline(s) he or she teaches, and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful to students.

Principle #2:
The teacher understands how students learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social, and personal development.

Principle #3:
The teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners.

Principle #4:
The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.

Principle #5:
The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.

Principle #6:
The teacher uses knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.

Principle #7:
The teacher plans instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals.

Principle #8:
The teacher understands and uses formal/informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social, and physical development of the learner.

Principle #9:
The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his or her choices and actions on others (students, parents, and other professionals in the learning community) and who actively seeks opportunities to grow professionally.

Principle #10:
The teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and well-being.

Used with permission from The Council of Chief State School Officers. From *Model for beginning teacher licensing and development: A resource for state dialogue* by Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium. Published in 1992 by the Council of Chief State Officers.

Figure 4.9

and growth in other areas. The components of the Dimensions model are listed in Figures 4.10–4.14.

Dimension 1 (see Figure 4.10) deals with components of creating a positive learning environment for students, including maintaining a comfortable and orderly classroom.

I. Dimension 1: Helping Students Develop Positive Attitudes and Perceptions About Learning

A. The instructor helps all students feel accepted.

B. The instructor helps all students develop a sense of comfort in the classroom.

C. The instructor has designed instruction so that it reinforces students' sense of order in the classroom.

D. The instructor helps students clearly understand assigned tasks.

E. The instructor helps students believe that they have the ability and resources to successfully complete assigned tasks.

From *Observing Dimensions of Learning in Classrooms and Schools* by John L. Brown, pp. 111–112, Figure 9.10. © 1995 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Figure 4.10

Dimension 2 (see Figure 4.11) relates to the components of teaching students how to obtain and apply knowledge by providing students with support and reinforcing their skills.

II. Dimension 2: Helping Students Acquire and Integrate Knowledge

A. The instructor has designed instruction to help students construct meaning for declarative knowledge (i.e., facts, concepts, generalizations, principles) through the use of a variety of interactive strategies.

B. Students receive support to organize and store declarative knowledge effectively.

C. The instructor introduces and reinforces essential procedural knowledge (i.e., skills, processes, procedures) through ongoing modeling, shaping, and internalizing that includes providing extensive practice opportunities.

From *Observing Dimensions of Learning in Classrooms and Schools* by John L. Brown, pp. 111–112, Figure 9.10. © 1995 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Figure 4.11

Dimension 3 (see Figure 4.12) pertains to the components of helping students increase and broaden their knowledge through the use of instructional support and emphasis on higher-order thinking skills.

III. Dimension 3: Helping Students Extend and Refine Knowledge

A. Wherever appropriate, students receive instructional support to "own" essential knowledge through activities requiring thoughtful application.

B. The instructor's questions focus on higher-level thinking and processes, rather than exclusive emphasis on knowledge/recall.

C. Students receive support to understand and apply important thinking processes such as the following:

- Comparison
- Classification
- Induction
- Deduction
- Analyzing errors
- Constructing support
- Abstracting/pattern recognition
- Analysis of perspectives

From *Observing Dimensions of Learning in Classrooms and Schools* by John L. Brown, pp. 111–112, Figure 9.10. © 1995 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Figure 4.12

Dimension 4 (see Figure 4.13) refers to components relating to how teachers engage their students in learning related to real-life skills.

IV. Dimension 4: Meaningful Use of Knowledge

A. Where appropriate, the instructor involves students in long-term, self-directed, experience-based learning activities that reflect real-world roles and situations.

B. Where appropriate, the instructor engages students in meaningful-use tasks designed to reinforce their ability to use the following thinking operations:

- Decision making
- Investigation
- Problem solving
- Experimental inquiry
- Invention

From *Observing Dimensions of Learning in Classrooms and Schools* by John L. Brown, pp. 111–112, Figure 9.10. © 1995 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Figure 4.13

Dimension 5 (see Figure 4.14) corresponds to ways that teachers can encourage learning and intellectual growth in students.

V. Dimension 5: Developing and Using Productive Habits of Mind

A. The instructor models effective thinking skills and behaviors.

B. The instructor encourages students to reflect on their own thinking and monitor their own comprehension.

C. The instructor has designed classroom activities to reinforce students' ability to be self-regulated in their thinking, including planning, use of resources, sensitivity to feedback, and evaluating the effectiveness of their own actions.

D. The instructor encourages students to be effective critical thinkers, including seeking accuracy and clarity, being open-minded, and restraining impulsivity.

E. The instructor encourages students to be creative, to express their own opinions, to push the limits of their knowledge, and to generate new ways of viewing a situation.

From *Observing Dimensions of Learning in Classrooms and Schools* by John L. Brown, pp. 111–112, Figure 9.10. © 1995 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Figure 4.14

All of these models identify key components of good teaching. When observed in the classroom, these various principles, domains, components, or dimensions all indicate effective teaching practices. Mentors must keep in mind that it is easy to inadvertently use these criteria to determine what novice teachers cannot do, but the criteria should be used as a formative evaluation to determine areas for mentees to direct their learning. Without a lens to focus a classroom observation, mentors and mentees can overlook areas of strength or omit areas for further learning.

In some cases, mentors may be able to select the lens, or model, that will be used during observations. If this is the case, mentors need to review their options by comparing the models presented to determine the best fit. The following analysis (see Figure 4.15) can help mentors decide what model will be the most comfortable for them to use, and completing the comparison chart can help mentors visualize more clearly the components of each potential lens.

If a district already has selected one of these models as the lens that they will use, mentors may want to compare the models in this text to broaden their own understanding of these well-known ideas. It also might

Analysis of the Lenses

Review the models presented and jot down your answers to the following questions.

Compare the models. What is similar? What is different?

Which model would you find most compatible with your teaching? Why?

Which one would you feel most comfortable using in a mentoring situation? Why?

Depending on the developmental level of your mentee, which model would you utilize? Why?

Share your perspective with another mentor, then list your observations below to create a comparison chart.

PATHWISE	Framework

INTASC	Dimensions

Figure 4.15

be helpful for mentors to incorporate other ideas from the various models into discussions to expand conversations about teaching and learning.

The Conferencing Cycle

After mentors and mentees have developed a comfortable trust level and identified a lens to use for observation, they are ready to start the conferencing cycle. The preobservation, observation, and postobservation cycle provides a process for addressing what occurs in the classroom.

The Preobservation Conference

The first phase of the conferencing cycle, the preobservation conference, is when mentees inform their mentors of what will be happening in their classroom, and then both parties identify what the focus of that particular observation will be. This conference should take place prior to the mentor's visit to the classroom, but close enough to the observation that mentees have their plans for a particular lesson completed. During the conference, mentees should identify the objectives for the lesson and articulate their reasons for their choices for the lesson, as well as describe the steps they will follow or the structure they will use to engage the students in the learning. Mentees also need to identify how they plan to determine if the students are successful in meeting objectives. Both parties should be aware of the lens that is being used, so, for example, if the Framework for Teaching is used as a lens, mentees know that Component 1a requires a demonstration of their knowledge of content and pedagogy.

In the initial observation, mentors should focus on one or two components from the model they are using so the novice teacher is not overwhelmed. In later observations mentors can gather evidence for all components of the selected model. Therefore, the choice of lens provides a focus for the preobservation conversation: mentees are aware of the specifics they need to identify in their planning process, and mentors know that they need to ask guiding questions if the mentees do not address the various components identified by the lens.

The preobservation conference is also a time for mentors to clarify anything they hear from their mentees that they are unsure about and to probe with guiding questions when they do not hear enough about a particular aspect of the lesson. This conversation should provide the mentor with some understanding of the mentee's planning skills. The give and take of this interaction allows mentees to expand their thinking about the choices they have made for this lesson. By clarifying the rationale for their plans and carefully addressing the details, novice teachers can be more successful while teaching the actual lesson.

A classroom observation should never take place without the preobservation conference. This conference might lead to the creation of a refined lesson plan, or it might indicate to the mentor that the mentee needs some additional ideas about a certain topic. Observing a lesson without prior conversation can lead to misconceptions about the mentee's plans. For example, a mentor might focus solely on management issues for a lesson in which the mentee was working to use active learning. In this case, the mentor might fail to understand what occurred in the classroom, because his or her focus was only on management. A mentee can also specify if there is something they want the mentor to focus on during the observation.

A preobservation conference does not always need to be a face-to-face interaction, although that is often the best way for people to communicate. The preobservation conference can be completed through written interaction—by sharing lesson plans and offering written details to explain the rationale for the method and content selection. If scheduling conflicts prevent the mentee and mentor from meeting prior to the lesson, a phone conversation is another option. A brief conversation between the mentor and mentee based on written comments and plans is useful in preventing misunderstandings.

The following dialogue demonstrates examples of questions that can be asked in a preobservation conference to share information about the upcoming observation, and what type of focus these questions represent. The focus for each observation may vary according to the lens used.

Dialogue: Preconference Questions

Review the sample questions listed below and discuss them with another mentor, or reflect on how these questions might impact a preobservation conference. (Note the attempt to avoid language that could be misinterpreted by the mentee.) The information the question is attempting to discover is listed following each question in parentheses. Mentors can use such questions to gather evidence about their mentees' planning skills.

What is it you want your students to know and/or be able to do at the end of this lesson? (objective/knowledge of content)

Why did you chose this particular focus for your lesson? (purpose)

How do you think your students will do with this lesson? (knowledge of students)

How have you created connections between this lesson, yesterday's lesson, and tomorrow's lesson? (prior knowledge)

How are you planning to do_____ [insert instructional strategy]? (knowledge of instructional practices)

How will you know that the students have met your goals? (assessment)

What would you like me to look for in this lesson? (self knowledge; reflection)

If mentees cannot provide answers to some of these questions during the pre-observation conference, they may not be sufficiently prepared for the lesson. In this case, further discussion may be needed and mentors may need to directly ask that some additional components be added to the lesson. However, the purpose of the pre-observation conference is to broaden the mentor's awareness of the lesson that will be observed, and the discussion prior to the lesson may not fully reveal the depth of the mentee's planning. Mentors need to try to help mentees articulate the rationale for their plans and offer guidance, but often the full details of planning are not uncovered until the lesson is actually taught. This is why the full conference cycle—pre-observation conference, observation, and post-observation conference—should be completed before mentors draw conclusions.

The Observation

When mentors are observing a class, their goal is to be unobtrusive, so that what occurs in the classroom is no different from what would occur if they were not present. When observing, mentors need to position themselves where they can see both the teacher and the students. It is also helpful if the mentor can avoid being constantly in the students' sight. Usually this means taking a seat in the back of the room, although sitting to the side of the classroom is also an option. Mentors can move if students are placed in groups or if the activity in the room changes location in order to see and hear teacher and student comments. Some mentors prefer to remain anonymous during the observation, but students are naturally curious about having another teacher present. It is helpful if mentors offer an introduction or brief explanation to help students view observations as a normal part of the teaching and learning process.

During the observation, mentors need to gather evidence of what is happening. Figure 3.2 in Chapter 3 is an example of an informal observation form, and several other tools that can be used to gather data during the observation are described in Chapter 5. Whatever means mentors use to gather evidence, the goal is to remain objective and gather information to help mentees examine and reflect on their practice. The observational

focus can be based on a request made by a mentee who wants to gather information about a particular aspect of his or her teaching, or can be determined by the mentor's use of the identified lens.

The Post-Observation Conference

After the observation, mentors and mentees need to get together to talk about the evidence gathered. This data should be shared *without* interpretation. The goal of the post-observation conference is to help mentees reflect on what happened in the lesson, to think about why something did or did not occur, and to consider other options or ideas for the future. Mentors can use guiding questions that focus on what actually happened in the classroom to assist the analysis. Guiding questions also can be used as a follow-up to help expand the conversation beyond a mentee's original thoughts.

Based on the data gathered and the mentee's reflection on that evidence, mentors need to ask their mentees what they plan to do next. These steps can be incorporated into an action plan to help mentees continue to enhance their skills. The next observational cycle should then be based upon issues identified in the action plan. During each subsequent observation, mentees should attempt to apply what they learned from the previous observation to the new lesson.

In order for pre- and post-observation conferences to be effective, mentors and mentees must have developed a trusting relationship, and mentors must use effective communication skills. No matter how much data is gathered and how many wonderful ideas mentors may offer to mentees, mentees will not be able to listen and respond to these issues if they are fearful of being evaluated on evidence from the observation. The observational cycle is intended to be formative and should be used as the basis of ongoing growth and development. No matter what lens mentors use during the observational cycle, honest, open, and trusting communication between mentors and mentees enables beginning teachers to think carefully about their teaching and make a conscious effort to develop their skills in certain areas.

The following practice dialogues can be role-played by mentors using various lenses as a focus. If mentors are not able to work with a colleague, they should write out what they might say to the mentee portrayed in the scenario as if they were working with him or her. These dialogues are meant to help mentors become familiar with using a lens and comfortable when applying it to pre- and post-observation conferences.

Dialogue: The Observational Cycle

Select a lens provided in this chapter or one your school has developed for use in the following simulated pre- and post-observation conferences. The lens you choose will guide your questions for these conversations. Then, read through the descriptions in Figures 4.16 and 4.17. What do you see and hear in these scenarios? What guiding questions would you ask in these situations to encourage your mentee's reflective thinking? With another mentor, take turns role-playing the parts of the mentor and mentee. As the mentee, try to role-play as if you have limited understanding of your work, so the mentor is challenged to ask appropriate questions. In your role-play as a mentor, try to demonstrate communication skills that may be helpful during conferencing. If you are writing your response, consider all the possible reasons for the mentee's behavior and respond accordingly.

There is more than one way to respond to the pre- and post-observation scenarios in Figures 4.16 and 4.17. Using these scenarios gives mentors practice considering what they are going to say and how they are going to say it when responding to a mentee. In addition, mentors get practice in "reading between the lines" of what a mentee tells them. When mentors are in a real conference setting, they have to make immediate decisions. This dialogue helps mentors think about all of the options for how they might respond to various situations, and to actually practice doing so. Mentors should use this opportunity to carefully consider their response as a mentor to what they hear and see in these pre- and post-observation scenarios. This will help to develop their ability to provide support that their mentees are open to hearing.

While there are no "right" answers for the scenarios outlined in Figures 4.16 and 4.17, mentors will sharpen their own thinking skills as they practice the responses. Engaging in a verbal response, as if they were speaking to their mentees in these situations, provides mentors with a chance to hear themselves and consider the endless possibilities for mentees' behavior as well as their own responses.

As mentors review these situations, they need to think about the words they use to respond to their mentees and the tone of voice they need to use to convey their feelings in a supportive way. In addition, mentors need to review the communication processes they used when asking questions to probe further into what would be happening in the lesson (pre-conference) or when discovering why things occurred the way they did (post-conference).

continued on page 92

Pre-Observation Situations

1. During the pre-observation conference, your mentee seems distracted and shifts nervously in his chair. As you ask about his objectives and plans for the lesson, he mentions that he and his girlfriend have decided to get married during the winter break. You ask about the wedding plans, and then shift the conversation back to the lesson. The mentee presents several pages of typed lesson plans, and says that he hopes you will look at how he is using questioning in his class, as he thinks he might be focusing on only a few people. "Some of these fifth graders can really provide some interesting answers, and I think I am relying on a few of the smarter ones to carry the discussion," he states. After you talk about what he has planned to help involve all the students in the discussion, he says that he hopes he has time to do all of this planning, considering the approaching wedding and everything. He adds that he never realized how long it would take him to plan for each day's learning.
2. For several days you have tried to set up a time to talk with your mentee prior to today's observation. The mentee has been busy and backed out of these scheduled meetings, so you are now talking with her during the passing period right before you are scheduled to observe the lesson. She tells you that she has everything organized, but that she will not really be teaching today as students are presenting information from their reports on explorers. She says there really is no need for a lesson plan or conversation about the lesson prior to the observation because of this student activity.
3. Your mentee has been exceptional with whole class instruction. You would like him to try to incorporate some cooperative learning into his teaching. You have shared and discussed several articles on the subject, and after your last observation, the mentee said that he would intentionally plan to use some cooperative learning strategies in future lessons. As you talk with him about the lesson you will be observing, you note that it is, again, a whole class lesson.
4. As you discuss the upcoming observation with your mentee, she refers several times to one particular student, Taylor, who really "bugs her." The lesson plan, part of a unit on healthy eating, is well planned. Students have been recording their food intake for several days, and today will compare their food journal to descriptions of healthy diets using a Venn diagram. As you conclude your conversation, the teacher says that she does not expect that Taylor will have anything done.
5. You have been working with your mentee for several weeks, and this is your first visit to his second grade class. As you discuss the upcoming observation, the teacher says, "I really want to be clear in my directions. I think that I often say things in such a confusing way that my poor students don't know what to do!" You tell him that you will look closely at this and see if you can gather some information on that for him. You note that he has tested and divided his students by reading ability. You ask him how he came to this decision. He replies that he really likes reading groups because it is easier to address the common needs of students rather than worry about all of them at once.

Figure 4.16

Post-Observation Situations

1. A new teacher in a seventh-grade history class uses a questioning tone in all of her conversations with students. She asks them if they would like to be quiet or if they would like to start their work, and they respond by ignoring her. It takes most of the lesson just to get the students organized and working. Her lesson was to be a discussion of the U.S. Constitution, and the stated objective was for the students to "understand how the Constitution impacts their lives." She put the students in groups and gave them the Constitution to read. She then asked them to generate ideas about how this has impacted their lives, and to have it ready for tomorrow. She gave students the rest of the class to complete the work.
2. A teacher in a fourth-grade classroom wanted his students to write descriptive sentences. He gave each table group a set of cards that had either an adjective, verb, or noun printed on it and asked each group to put together the most descriptive sentence they could using the words they were given. When the groups had a sentence, they taped them together and put them up on the wall for the rest of the class to see. After all groups were done, the students selected the sentences that they felt were the most descriptive. Students were then asked to write descriptive sentences on their own.
3. A high school science teacher provided her students with a text that described plant and animal cells and included directions for a cell exploration lab. She then gave her students leaf samples and told them to follow the directions in the text, and then write up a lab report on their findings. Students followed the directions and created slides of leaves to depict plant cells. They also created a slide of animal cells using a scraping taken from the inside of their cheeks. When this was done, students were then told to examine these slides under a microscope and identify the differences between the two cell types, using the text and their lab results to support their answers. Students were given a template for the lab report that asked them to draw the cells as they saw them through the microscope.
4. A sixth grade math teacher asked his students to create a survey to gather data to be displayed in a graph. The students decided to ask their classmates about their favorite lunch items on the school lunch menu and created several questions to ask their classmates at lunch. During this lesson, students graphed their results. The students' work included some graphs that had tally marks for all responses, some with averages, some with comparisons. There were pie charts, bar graphs, and line graphs. Before the students began working on their graphs for today's class, the teacher told them they needed to use the most appropriate method to clearly display their results. After the teacher collected the graphs, he told the students that they were going to be graded on neatness.
5. The ninth grade English class you just observed was the loudest class you have ever sat through. The teacher was leading a whole class discussion on *Romeo and Juliet*. Side conversations were going on throughout the lesson, several students were doing other work, and those that were paying attention kept saying things such as "This is dumb," "How do you know that is what he said?" and "Why do we have to read this junk anyway?" The teacher kept going, ignored all remarks, and summarized each scene in the play for her students.

Figure 4.17

continued from page 89

There are several possible responses to a scenario. For example, mentors in a situation similar to that of preobservation situation 2 may be irritated that their mentee does not seem to be able to connect with them; they may even get the feeling that she does not want to talk to them at all. Regardless, mentors still need to convey warmth and understanding as they talk to the mentee, as well as let the mentee know that they will discuss things further after the lesson. The mentee in this scenario may be afraid of the mentoring process or fearful that she will not do well, so she is avoiding the situation. Acknowledging this emotion is as important as providing examples of how to link the assessment (student presentation) with an objective (perhaps student public speaking objectives as well as research objectives and an objective to develop a particular knowledge base about the content). However, there are many ways to say this and many ideas that could be shared.

In addition, in preobservation situation 2, mentors may be concerned when the mentee states that there is no need for a lesson plan for this activity, but it is important that mentors do not show frustration through their voice or tone. However, the mentor can be a bit more directive during the postconference and point out that it is easier to set up a schedule for visits ahead of time, and explain to the mentee that he or she will be coming in to talk at least once a week (or whenever the mentor's schedule allows for regular meetings). It might be helpful for mentors to empathize with the fact that it is disconcerting to have someone watching during a lesson, while communicating that they want to make their classroom visits a supportive learning experience for the mentees.

During the postobservation that would inevitably occur for preobservation situation 2, the mentor would point out that whether the mentee has articulated it or not, there are reasons for the decisions she makes in the classroom. The mentor could then ask the mentee why she asked the students to give reports, what preteaching went on before the students were to give the reports, if the reports were going to be assessed, and if so, how they were going to be assessed. These types of guiding questions point out to the mentee that any student presentation is a part of a larger objective and that she needs to be able to identify the reasons for making decisions about what goes on in the classroom.

If the mentee is not able to give any answers or provide any reasons for the decisions that led up to this class, then the mentor needs to provide some examples. The mentor might say, "The students were investigating _____. This is a part of the curriculum, and so you seem to be checking their under-

standing of the topic by having them research and provide information to their classmates. This is a form of assessment, and as all assessment is linked to an objective, I am wondering what your objective was for this lesson." Again, a supportive, but firm tone is necessary so that the mentee hears clearly that she needs to have objectives and reasons for what occurs in the classroom, and that those are best captured in some form of a lesson plan.

Mentors might want to provide, as resources, several different formats of lesson plans that they have used so the mentees have some options. Some mentees are leery of using a complex lesson plan format because it is so time consuming. Mentors need to offer some ideas for abbreviated lesson plans that help with time management so that mentees do the planning, but in a way that is helpful to them and clear to the mentor.

Mentors can make their classroom observations highly useful and helpful to their mentees by developing an understanding of how to use lenses and an awareness of the conferencing cycle. Practicing applying lenses, using guiding questions, and reflecting back to the mentee helps mentors become prepared for similar situations with their own mentees.

Chapter 5

Data-Gathering Techniques and Tools

Imagine that a mentor walks into a classroom and takes a random snapshot that includes all of the students and the teacher. What might this snapshot tell the mentor about the teaching and learning going on in that particular room? The photo might show two students facing each other, engaged in conversation, while the rest of the students are facing the teacher and holding their pencils to their notebooks. Is it correct for the mentor to assume that the two students who are talking are off task and talking about something other than the lesson? Is it correct for the mentor to assume that all the students looking at the teacher are engaged in the lesson? The mentor cannot be sure, as he or she does not know what is being said. A mentor needs to be able to hear the conversation to speculate further about the teaching, and needs to be able to talk to those involved to know what they are thinking. Therefore, gathering data about what goes on in a classroom means going beyond a snapshot.

Mentors observe novice educators in the classroom as part of the mentoring process. As described in Chapter 4, the observation cycle involves a conversation before and after the mentor's visit to the classroom. The focus of the observation should be identified during the preobservation conference, and these issues should be the main focus of

the post-observation conference. In other words, the mentor and the mentee talk about what will occur in the lesson, the lesson is taught, and then they discuss whether or not what was expected to happen actually occurred. As they conference about the lesson, using the predetermined lens to focus the conversation, it is important that the mentor identifies specific things that happened in the classroom to facilitate the reflection. Data-gathering techniques and tools can be used to help focus the discussion by providing evidence that identifies what the mentor saw and heard in the classroom.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the need for specific language is crucial in the debriefing that occurs after an observation. Mentors need to gather specific evidence that provides a mirror to reflect what happened in the classroom so mentees can think about why things happened a particular way. Without evidence, the conversation becomes centered around what mentors *thought* they observed, rather than what actually occurred. Mentees need to be encouraged to look at the data—the evidence gathered during the observation—and reflect about what occurred. This evidence can help mentors offer suggestions or help to develop an action plan to address ideas that come from mentees' reflective comments.

Scripting

Mentors need to be unbiased recorders of the events that occur in a classroom. Scripting involves taking notes that represent a script of classroom interactions. Mentors sit in a location in the classroom that provides them with a good view of the students and the teacher and write down what they see and hear. Any interpreting of classroom interactions done by mentors during scripting should be noted as such, so mentees have the opportunity to respond and clarify.

For example, a scripted statement such as "The teacher frightened the students with her reprimands" is an interpreted statement. The mentor has no idea if the students were really frightened. What mentors should provide, through noninterpreted scripting, is simply a description of what they saw and heard. This same situation might be scripted in this way: "The teacher said, Get your homework out right now! No more fooling around or I will have to keep some of you in from recess today! Students looked startled, all immediately took out their work."

During the post-observation conference, the mentor might show the mentee the notes, or read the notes to the mentee, asking "I wondered if the students might have been a little surprised by your comments [read the scripted statement]." At this point, the mentee can respond and clarify, or

explain the context. For example, perhaps this was a procedure that the class had been focusing on for several days, and the teacher felt the students should have been able to get to work. Or, the mentee might respond that she did not realize she used those words. In either case, the mentor can then ask guiding questions to facilitate the mentee's reflective thinking, such as the following:

- "How did you intend to identify those students who would be held in for recess if they hadn't gotten out their assignments?"
- "If you followed through on this consequence, who would stay with the students who were kept in for recess?"
- "Would you keep all of the students in for recess?"
- "Is there another way you could help students be accountable for following through on your requests?" (A mentor whose mentee needs more support can offer a more directive response, such as suggesting having a time schedule or a daily agenda on the board so that students know when it is time to get out their homework. Or, the mentor could suggest that the mentee write the directions on the board in large letters and direct students to do what is written on the board.)

Mentors can facilitate a mentee's reflective thinking by providing evidence or data from the mentee's classroom and asking him or her to respond to it. Mentors can ask follow-up questions such as "What about this?", "What do you think this means?", and "Why do you think this happened?" after presenting the mentee with evidence of classroom interactions. Again, mentors need to avoid the urge to editorialize about why they think certain classroom interactions occurred.

The evidence gathered should reflect both areas of concern and strengths of the teaching interaction. This is the benefit of using the scripting technique—because all interactions are written down, all major events that occur in the classroom are noted. With this complete overview, mentors provide a view of the classroom that beginning teachers often cannot see.

There are several scripting formats mentors can use to become comfortable with gathering evidence. The old adage "Practice makes perfect" also applies to scripting. Mentors can try the following techniques to hone their scripting skills.

- Watch and script talk shows to develop style and shorthand skills.
- Script a conversation that happens at home.
- Sit in on a fellow mentor's class to try out scripting skills.

- Get several mentors together and observe the same TV show or videotapes of classroom interactions. Have everyone script, and then compare.

Throughout the mentoring process, mentors are learning as well as mentees, and their scripting skills will not be fully refined at the beginning of the relationship. Mentors can communicate this to their mentees and ask them to help support their learning in this area. Mentors need to be open to the fact that their scripts may be less than 100 percent accurate and ask their mentees to confirm or refute their findings. In this way, both mentors and mentees can facilitate each other's growth and development.

There are several different types of scripting formats mentors can use. The examples below each offer a different scripting method and a blank form to use, if needed. The examples are brief portions of the total scripted lesson.

Anecdotal Record

The anecdotal record (see Figure 5.1) is a form of scripting that allows the observer to note events that occur at particular times during the lesson, and includes a place for comments so that interpretations might be captured and set aside for later discussion with the mentee.

Anecdotal Record

Name of teacher: _____ Date: _____

Name of mentor: _____ Class/grade: _____

Time	Anecdotal notes	Comments

Figure 5.1

The example in Figure 5.2 shows how an anecdotal record can be used.

Anecdotal Record Example

Name of teacher:	Ms. Marks	Date: 10-12-99
Name of mentor:	Mrs. Johnson	Class/grade: 10th grade Biology
Time	Anecdotal notes	Comments
8:45	Bell rings Ms. M: "Today we will be looking at the process of photosynthesis. Has anyone heard this term before?" Student: "Yah, it has something to do with the plants being green." Ms. M: "Yes! What else?"	Students are in seats Ms. M writes student comment on board
	Students respond.	All student comments are added to list on board; (M) calls on 5 students—3 g (girls), 2 b (boys). Many students raise their hands, one of the boys called upon did not raise his hand.
9:00	Ms. M: "Okay! Let's take what we already know about this process and add to this info. I'd like you to take out your notebooks and write this down. Jimmy and Julie, notebooks out please."	Overhead of photo. (photosynthesis) process used—nice, clear diagram J & J (Jimmy and Julie) respond to (M)'s request
9:15	(M): "Now can anyone think of what this model looks like?" (S) (student): "Some sort of a factory?"	Nice use of analogy —students have to think!
	(M): "Yes—a factory that produces energy for the plant and oxygen for us!"	

Figure 5.2

SkyLight Professional Development

* Please note that the original scripted notes were handwritten on duplicate paper so that a copy could be given to the mentee during the post-observation conference. Mentors can also photocopy these notes so mentees have their own copy. When gathering evidence, mentors usually use a handwritten process, although a laptop computer also can be used to capture comments and record observations. Shorthand devices, created by the mentor, are used in this example, and would most likely be developed by anyone using scripting to streamline the process. The parentheses in this example contain explanations of shorthand used by the author. The teacher's name also might be shortened to simply an "M" in a circle, and student comments indicated by an "S" in a circle. Because these shorthand techniques are idiomatic to each scripter, the mentee should be given a copy of the notes only when the mentor is present to interpret any abbreviations and translate any unintelligible handwriting.

Freewriting

This concept does not attempt to capture specific statements and observations, but rather describes in a paragraph format the overall sequence of events. This is usually done without a formal sheet upon which to take notes, and is simply written on a blank sheet of paper. This narrative is then shared with the mentee during a post-observation conference. As the name implies, mentors simply write down all that comes into their frame of reference (see Figure 5.3). This means that some interpretation might be included and will need to be clarified during the post-observation conference. No form is offered for this example since all that is really necessary is a blank sheet of paper.

Focused Scripting

In this format, mentors specifically use a lens to focus the comments captured in the scripting. Mentors and mentees should have discussed this lens in the pre-observation conference. Although the lens is always taken into consideration in an observation, this form of scripting filters out any observations not related to the lens, while other forms of scripting simply capture all interactions and assess them as they relate to the lens in the post-observation conference. In focused scripting, the observer (mentor) looks for evidence in classroom interactions that support the language and expectations defined in the lens. For example, if the lens used is the INTASC standards, the mentoring program might have developed a form to use that identifies those standards. The mentor then writes down what occurs that fits into each category. If mentors or the mentoring program develop a form to use, this form should be used in a very flexible manner. Rigid adherence

Freewriting Example

Jack Jones's observation, Tues., March 15, 1997

Fourth grade at HMS elem., 2:00 P.M.

Jack tells the class that they will be starting their literature lesson and asks them to put away the math that they were working on. Students have worksheets on long division on their desks. Some really don't seem to want to put this away, and Jack has to ask them several times to put the math away and get out their copy of the book, *The Cay*. Jack asks one student to tell the class where they should be (page number), and asks students to open books. He begins to read to them. Some students appear to be following along, some seem to be daydreaming. A student raises his hand and asks how Timothy got to the island—says they don't remember that part. Jack asks for a student to give the answer. Many students want to tell this part. A student who is practically jumping up and down is called on and he gives a lengthy description of this part of the story. Jack resumes reading, and then says that students who wish to can volunteer to read one paragraph at a time. Students take turns reading. Jack then asks the students several provocative questions: Why do you think the author had the young boy go blind? What do we think about people who are blind? Is this a stereotype? What can you say about this blind boy? Students get into the discussion, which is teacher-led but seems to involve most students. After this, students are directed to get out a sheet of paper and write in their literature journals what they think is going to happen next in the novel. Students write until Jack tells them to put their stuff away and get ready to go home.

Jane Smith, observer

Figure 5.3

to any form limits the perspective that mentors can provide. However, to avoid missing teaching and learning events that are helpful points of discussion, focused scripting can ensure that mentees can identify how and where they meet the criteria that is expected of them. Again, mentors do not use these evaluatively, but rather to provide formative data that can be used as a starting point for further growth and development.

The focused script in Figure 5.4 demonstrates that responses tend to be brief, and in this case, are focused to correspond to the bulleted criteria. This form can be helpful to a beginning scripter, as specific information is being sought. On the other hand, trying to separate the multilayers of events that occur in a classroom and place them into appropriate categories is difficult for many beginning scripters. Because classroom interactions do not occur in the order that the principles or criteria are listed, it is easy for mentors to miss some of what is going on in the classroom as they search for the right place to record their observations. A blank form is not offered for this example since the lenses used may vary. Mentors who wish to create a scripting form can list the standards and components of the lens they choose, and then describe the evidence underneath the related standard.

Focused Scripting Example (Using INTASC Standards)

School District XYZ
Observation Form
Mentee: Becky Martin Mentor: Heidi Smith
Date: 11/12/97 Class/Grade: seventh-grade English

1. Subject Matter
   - Selects teaching methods, activities, and material appropriate for students and the discipline.
   - Demonstrates subject mastery and general teaching knowledge.
   - Understands and teaches the connections between the disciplines, with other disciplines, and with life experiences.

   Evidence:

   Becky describes very clearly her choices for her lesson and her objectives specify the student learning that should occur.
2. Student Learning
   - Demonstrates familiarity with relevant aspects of students' base knowledge and experiences.
   - Demonstrates familiarity with the way students learn and develop.
   - Provides learning opportunities that support students' intellectual, social, and personal growth.

   Evidence:

   Becky said: "Joseph, why don't you and Tommy work together on the ending to the story." All other students were working alone.

   (Note—Becky said later that Joseph didn't work well alone and that she was trying peer teaching.)
3. Diverse Learners
   - Demonstrates familiarity with students' cultural, ethnic, and experiential backgrounds.
   - Demonstrates familiarity with student differences in learning capabilities and approaches.
   - Provides learning opportunities that are adapted for students with diverse backgrounds and exceptionalities.

   Evidence:

   Nothing apparent from lesson—an area to focus on, perhaps?

Figure 5.4

4. Instructional Strategies
   - Makes the learning goals and instructional procedures clear to students.
   - Makes content comprehensible to students.
   - Encourages students to extend their thinking to include critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.

   Evidence:

   Becky had the objectives listed on the board. She identified the vocabulary that she thought would be difficult and had students make educated guesses about the definition (like a game format) and then had them check the definition in the dictionary before reading the story.

5. Learning Environment
   - Creates a climate that promotes fairness and positive social interaction.
   - Communicates behavioral expectations to students and establishes consistent standards of classroom behavior.
   - Attends to making the physical environment safe and conducive to learning.

   Evidence:

   Room is very cheery. Lots of student work on the board. A space is identified where the "new" endings to the stories students are reading will be displayed upon completion. I wonder if all student work is displayed? Becky "works" the room and gets around to all students as they work on the story ending. She encourages: "I like that idea," and refocuses, "Mary, I don't think your math is what you should be doing now."

6. Communication
   - Uses knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster learning.
   - Assists students to communicate effectively about their learning needs and accomplishments.
   - Effectively formulates and asks questions and stimulates discussion.

   Evidence:

   Becky's tone is no-nonsense but not scary. Students are following directions and are on task. Has there been discussion about what they read? Students are directed to their work and they get busy. Later, students read their story endings to each other.

7. Planning Instruction
   - Articulates clear learning goals for the lesson that are appropriate for the students and the content.
   - Selects teaching methods, activities, and materials appropriate for students and content.
   - Plans for instruction; aligns goals, instructions, and evaluation.

Figure 5.4 (continued)

Evidence:

Lesson plans are clear. Becky will assess the story endings, evaluating reading comprehension, creative writing, and use of adjectives and adverbs in writing to make it more interesting. How will these be evaluated? Is there a rubric?

8. Assessment
   - Demonstrates knowledge of and employs a variety of formal and informal assessment tools.
   - Uses assessment information to adapt instruction and support student learning.
   - Accurately and appropriately reports information regarding student learning.

   Evidence:

   Use of student work as assessment (student writing)—how does this fit into overall evaluation and grading? How is it evaluated?
9. Reflection and Professional Development
   - Reflects on the extent to which the learning goals were met.
   - Demonstrates professional responsibility and integrity.
   - Uses research, colleagues, and professional development opportunities to become a better teacher.

   Evidence:

   Becky is keeping a journal that she says is very helpful when reflecting on what happens in the classroom. She is going to attend a state workshop on adolescent literature next month.
10. Collaboration, Ethics, and Relationships
    - Builds professional relationships with colleagues.
    - Communicates with parents and guardians about student learning.
    - Collaborates with colleagues, families, and the community to foster healthy and productive student development.

    Evidence:

    A newsletter from Becky's class goes home each quarter that includes "letters from literature class" that has some excerpts from student work and specifies the main objectives for each quarter. She talks about her desire to get to know the other seventh-grade teachers better—a goal will be to make that happen.

Figure 5.4 (continued)

Visual/Auditory Evidence (I Saw . . . , I Heard . . . , I Thought . . .)

In Chapter 3, an observation form (see Figure 3.2) was provided that asked mentors to write down only what they saw and heard, and to specifically record both one positive area and one area of concern. This form was to be used to ask mentees guiding questions to facilitate the discussion. While

this form may not capture the full extent of classroom interactions, it is a good way for mentors to begin gathering evidence. This version is simple and very open and thus less intimidating for both parties: mentors can increase their skills without having to note so many interactions, and mentees are not overwhelmed by so much data.

In addition to this form, another simplified form (see Figure 5.5) can assist mentors in simply capturing what is seen and heard in the classroom without editorializing. This simpler form allows mentors more flexibility in gathering data, but assumes that a post-observation conference enables mentees to comment further on these occurrences and that a lens is part of the interpretation of these comments.

Observation Notes

Mentor: _____ Date: _____
Mentee: _____ Class/Grade: _____

When watching your class

I saw . . . I heard . . . I thought . . .

Figure 5.5

Using the same lesson taught by Becky from the previous example (see Figure 5.4), the comments captured on this form regarding student learning might look like the example provided in Figure 5.6.

Example of Observation Notes

I Saw . . .	I Heard . . .	I Thought . . .
Becky watched the class start working on the assignment. She then went over to two boys and spoke to them. She then moved the boys closer together.	Becky said, "Why don't you [Joseph] and Tommy work together on the ending to the story?"	I wondered if either of these boys was struggling, and perhaps Becky put them together so that one could help the other. I wondered what the other kids would think about two students getting to work together when all of the rest had to work alone.

Figure 5.6

In this manner, mentors capture only what is actually seen and heard, but can put down all of the unknowns into the *I Thought* column. This allows for further clarification when the notes are discussed with the mentee. In this way, mentors are not making a judgment on the event, but rather are opening the door for future conversation. The *I Thought* section enables mentees to think about the interaction from the mentors' perspective, and also enables mentees to respond and talk about why this occurred. For example, Becky might have put the boys together because they always talked, and by doing so she could give permission for what was going to occur anyway. If this were true, the mentor's question about the feelings of the other children would be valid. However, if Becky put the two boys together to offer support for a struggling learner, this shows that she has insight into the needs of her students and is making this choice to support the student's learning. In either case, the mentor does not know what is true. If mentors jot down their thoughts as they see and hear something occur in the classroom, they can ask questions later to fully explore the reasons behind the classroom interactions.

Dialogue: Various Scripting Formats

Look over the examples provided in Figures 5.1–5.6 and consider which one you might start with as you script your classroom observations.

- Discuss with another mentor your response to each format and give reasons for your choice. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each format?
- Identify why you might use a different format for different mentees or situations.
- Note what the information scripted in each example tells you as a mentor.
- Discuss how you might approach your post-observation conference using this data.

Proximity Analysis

Sometimes a picture is worth a thousand words when trying to reflect back to mentees what is happening in their classrooms. Conducting a proximity analysis can supply novice teachers with an image of their movements around the classroom and among students. This diagram can help make beginning teachers aware of which students they are focusing on and

which they are not paying as much attention to, and can demonstrate to teachers how comfortable they are getting "up close and personal" with their students. However, before creating a proximity analysis, mentors should ask their mentees if they might like to have this data as another picture of their work in the classroom. If the mentee is comfortable with this format, the mentor should proceed. However, if the mentee is uncomfortable, the mentor may need to wait to conduct the analysis until later in their relationship, or explain further why this type of data is helpful to novice teachers.

The use of proximity has long been considered an aid to classroom management issues. Most students are less likely to be off task if the teacher is standing right next to them. In addition, a look at teacher proximity identifies who is getting the teacher's attention—whether for academic support or for maintaining positive behavior. During the post-observation conference, mentees can address why they moved closer to some students and did not engage others. This reflection enables novice teachers to identify the reasons behind their behavior and to attune themselves to their movements in the classroom.

A diagram of the classroom is a helpful tool in starting a proximity analysis. If the classroom teacher has a map of his or her room, the mentor can simply make a copy and draw on it. If no such map is available, a quick sketch of the classroom seating arrangement will do. The drawing should identify the key areas of the classroom: chalkboard, teacher's desk, and student seating. A key can identify any particular codes used. The goal is to capture the teacher's movement in the classroom, indicated by an arrow and/or line. The mentor can include an indicator of where the teacher stops during the lesson by numbering the stops, or perhaps by noting the time for each pause in teacher movement. In addition, the mentor can note any other pertinent information—such as where the teacher is directing his or her comments—by arrows or some other symbol. There are no absolutes in creating a proximity diagram, except that the completed diagram should identify where the teacher was at particular moments throughout the lesson. Figure 5.7 demonstrates one way to create a proximity analysis.

Mentees need to put the proximity analysis into context during a debriefing conversation with their mentors in the post-observation conference. Without the debriefing conversation, any proximity diagram reflects only half of the story. For example, perhaps the teacher purposefully avoided a section of the room because those students always call out for attention, or perhaps he or she directed several comments toward one child because that student was absent yesterday and needed additional help.

The exercise below asks mentors to reflect on the proximity analysis in Figure 5.7 to get practice interpreting a proximity analysis.

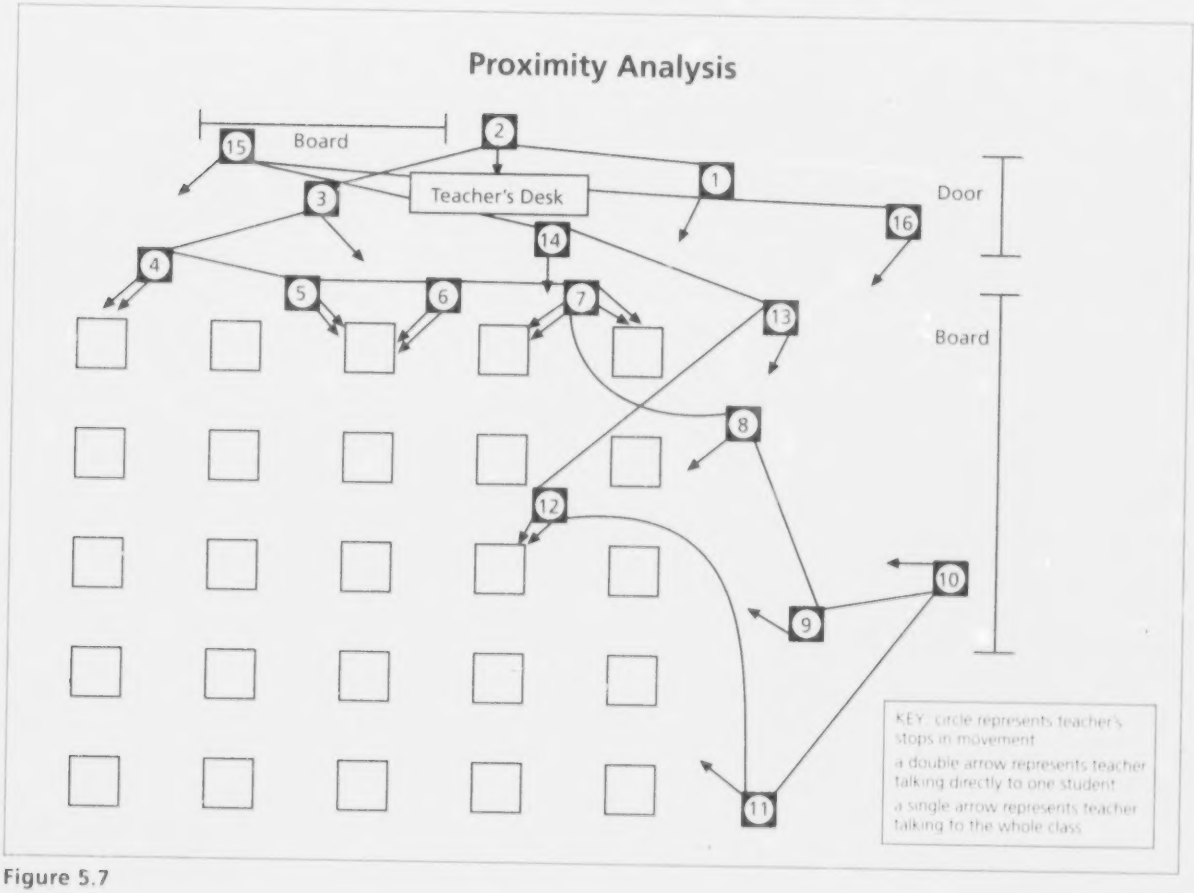

Figure 5.7

DIALOGUE

Dialogue: Proximity Analysis

After you review Figure 5.7 for a few minutes, consider what the diagram says to you. Consider how you would discuss this with your mentee. What patterns do you see that might need further explanation? What questions should you ask? Think about how you might begin a conversation with a mentee as you share this data. In addition, identify what misconceptions might be created without the mentee's interpretation of this diagram. Now practice this by role-playing with a colleague, or by saying out loud to yourself the questions you would ask and the comments you would make. Sharing an interpretation with a colleague can validate your interpretation or enable you to rethink your analysis of the diagram.

This proximity chart shows that the teacher's movements keep him or her primarily at the front of the room or over by the side of the chalkboard. At first glance, it could be interpreted that the teacher is ignoring the half of the class that is in the back of the room, away from the chalkboard. It also could be speculated that the teacher is connecting with a large number of the students. Without asking questions, mentors will not know what is true. Mentors might start out by saying something such as, "I diagrammed your movements as you were teaching, as we had discussed, and I wonder what you think about this." In this case, hopefully the mentee would notice the disproportionate use of the classroom space and offer a response. If not, mentors can offer their interpretations. It could be that the mentee was providing extra help and support to those students he or she moved close to, and the other students were functioning quite well on their own. It could also be that the novice teacher was intimidated by the students in the back and was avoiding them, or that he or she was totally unaware that the classroom space was not being used very effectively. The mentor and mentee's discussion of the data gathered through the proximity analysis provides for increased awareness on the part of the mentee and offers opportunities for the mentee to make changes in his or her teaching interactions.

The benefit of this thinking-out-loud dialogue is that mentors move beyond mere thoughts to a concrete verbal response. It is not always easy for mentors to come up with what they want to say to mentees. There is no one correct way to proceed in any conversation about an observation, but mentors can practice what they say, listening to themselves (perhaps via a tape recorder), and/or get feedback from colleagues about their ability to enhance their skills.

Verbal Flow

While the proximity diagram can include indicators of whom the teacher is talking to, sometimes this information can be the sole focus of the data being gathered. Looking at the verbal flow in the classroom allows mentors to gather evidence of the way teachers and students engage in conversation during the lesson. This is an especially useful tool to use during class discussions, when mentees are working to involve all students in the conversation.

A diagram of the verbal flow helps teachers see who they were actually addressing, who was being called on, and how much of the conversation was directed by the teacher. It is helpful for mentors to start with a seating chart, or mentors can draw a quick diagram of the classroom. During the

discussion, mentors simply draw arrows to indicate who is speaking to whom. Mentors can script some of the discussion that corresponds to the verbal flow diagram to capture the type of questions posed by the teacher and the responses made by students, as well as the teacher's follow up to those comments. These comments are difficult to include in the verbal flow diagram, but if mentors diagram for part of the discussion and script for part of it, they compile some interesting data.

Indicating the amount of time over which the verbal flow diagram was completed also can help teachers look at what interactions took place over a particular amount of time. Again, it is important that mentees have an opportunity to provide context to the diagram during the post-observation conference, so any underlying decisions made during the lesson are made clear to mentors.

Figure 5.8 is an example of one way a verbal flow diagram can be constructed.

Dialogue: Verbal Flow

Consider what the data in the verbal flow diagram (see Figure 5.8) seems to indicate. With another mentor, identify some reasons why this verbal flow might reflect a desired interaction during a class discussion, and why it might reflect some undesired interactions. Or, practice verbalizing what your thoughts are regarding the verbal flow diagram, as if you were talking to your mentee.

A mentor's discussion of the verbal flow diagram might focus on a number of things. A mentor might start this conversation by simply sharing the diagram and asking the mentee what he or she thinks about it. The mentee might recognize that most of his or her comments during class seemed to be directed toward a few individuals, and that some students were never engaged in any discussions. In addition, he or she may notice that some students seemed to be having side conversations. This can lead to a conversation about why particular students may be talking with the teacher more and what kinds of strategies the mentee may want to employ to encourage all students to participate. Small group discussions and cooperative learning might be some strategies the mentor can recommend. On the other hand, perhaps the students involved in the conversation had some questions that needed further explanation. Perhaps the side conver-

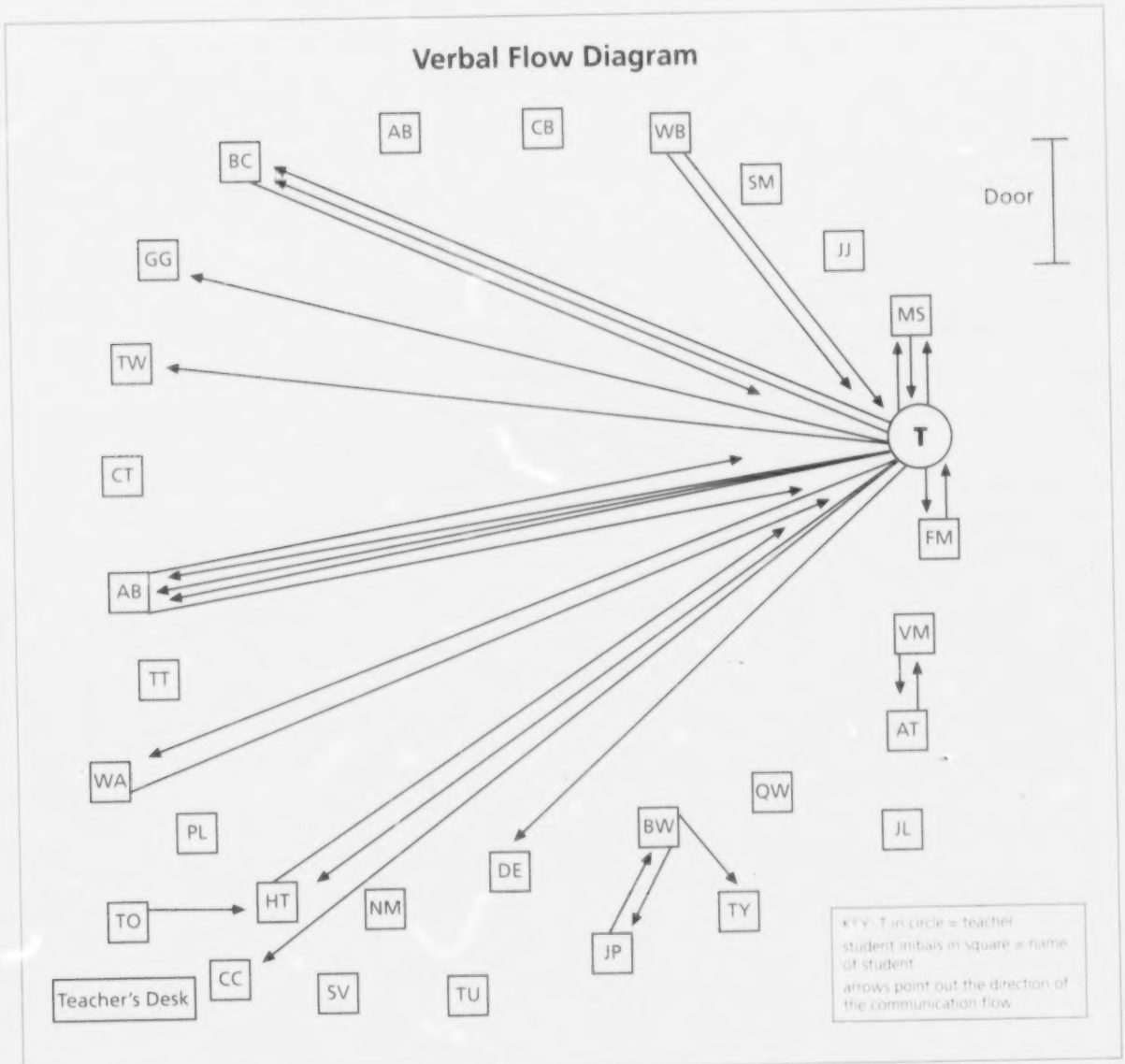

Figure 5.8

sations were off-task discussions, or perhaps these students were simply asking to borrow a pencil. Any of these are possibilities, but the mentee needs to reflect on why this series of verbal interactions took place, and determine if anything needs to be done about them. The verbal flow diagram provides data on one lesson's conversations, and it is the discussion of these issues that is the most valuable aspect of this process.

Numeric Data

Scripting and the use of diagrams provide evidence of classroom interactions that are qualitative or descriptive in nature. Sometimes it is helpful for mentees to receive more quantitative data. Again, mentors should discuss using a particular data-gathering device with mentees during the pre-observation conference, so they are not surprised by what is presented to them during the post-observation conference.

If mentees are using a particular idiom or interjection in their speech that might be distracting to learners, it might be helpful for mentors to count these occurrences to provide mentees with evidence that the identified speech pattern is not a random occurrence. "You guys," "like," and "um" are examples of often-unconscious interjections used by novice teachers. While mentees may not be able to totally eliminate these phrases from their speech, being aware of the number of times they use these terms can help them concentrate on using alternate language. (One option is to create an action plan to help them with this goal.)

Numeric data also can be used to keep track of student behavior. For example, numeric data can be used to create a time chart to count the number of students who appear to be off task at various intervals throughout the lesson. A chart listing various categories of questions might be used to keep track of the kinds of questions teachers use in a lesson, or perhaps to count the various types of comments teachers make to the class. For example, a list of items could be created including categories such as asking questions, giving directions, reprimanding students, and encouraging students, and a tick mark made every time novice teachers make one of these types of comments.

The use of numeric evidence, which provides hard data, can appear to be less supportive than other forms of data gathering. This is why it is important that mentors confer with mentees prior to using this technique. This tool is often helpful when mentees are not able to see what they are doing when provided with scripted evidence. If scripting or diagrams have not elicited any further awareness on the part of mentees, mentors may need to be more directive, and numeric data can provide support for directive comments. For example, if a novice teacher was aware of the need to ask open-ended questions to involve students in a discussion, but continued to ask yes/no questions even after a script provided examples that he or she only asked this type of question, it might be helpful to count the types of questions he or she asked and provide this as numeric data. With numeric data, mentors can indicate that a certain activity is occurring too frequently, or not often enough, and that the mentee needs to reduce or increase these occurrences. However, it is important that this type of data

is given only to the mentee and not shared with anyone who might be evaluating the mentee.

The dialogue below allows mentors to reflect on using numeric data when observing their mentees.

Dialogue: Use of Numeric Data

With another mentor, discuss your comfort level with the use of numeric data, or think about the following issues:

1. When would you gather this type of evidence?

2. How do you think gathering numeric data might impact your relationship with your mentee?

The questions listed above might raise some issues for mentors. Mentors might wonder when it is appropriate to use numerical data. Or mentors might be concerned that the gathering of such quantified evidence does not address the human side of the teaching act. Some mentors, when discussing this issue, have commented that when a person counts the number of times someone does something, the tally can seem to validate or refute an issue. Thus, the use of numerical data needs to be focused on some aspect of the mentee's teaching that can be, and should be, counted.

For example, if the intent is to determine the number of times open-ended questions are asked, numerical data will discern this information. However, this data alone does not identify all the other interactions that occurred during the lesson. Mentors need to think about whether the numerical data is being gathered to point out how poorly questions are being asked, or to show that indeed, some questions are very good. If a mentee does not see that they are asking only lower-order questions, a count of the number of open-ended questions will certainly point that out. More importantly, however, is that mentees develop the awareness that they need to be asking open-ended questions. The interpretation of the data can support the mentee's efforts or point out that the mentee's efforts are not working. The scripting of some of the questions and students' responses may provide more support for the mentee's ongoing use of these types of questions.

Above all, mentors need to be very clear about what they want to accomplish when gathering numerical data. Thus, numerical data gathering

should be used very intentionally and should be discussed carefully with the mentee so that the data supports ongoing learning. If a mentee feels that the data is being gathered simply to point out his or her poor efforts, the damage in the relationship with the mentor will be irreparable.

Video- and Audiotaping

A videotape of a lesson provides the ultimate mirror into the classroom. The tape captures everything going on in the classroom, and thus can help a first-year teacher see very explicitly what is happening in his or her classroom. While mentors can select only certain pieces of evidence to share with their mentees, the video camera shows everything. Therefore, mentors must use caution when taping beginning teachers as novices can be easily overwhelmed by all that they see on tape. In most cases, mentors should consider waiting until later in the year before videotaping a beginning teacher. However, if mentees are having difficulty identifying how their lessons are going or seem unable to reflect on their work, a videotape might provide the concrete evidence needed to help them see their teaching more clearly.

It is typical for those watching a video of themselves to focus more on their own self-image (and their dissatisfaction with it) than to see any teaching and learning events. This is especially true for beginning teachers who may still be narrowly focused on themselves and do not yet have a broader vision of the classroom. This is another good reason to wait to use a videotape until later in the experience. However, it also can be helpful for mentees to tape themselves early in the fall and then again later in the spring to demonstrate growth over the course of the year. Due to the distraction that a camera can cause in a classroom, mentors should run the camera and facilitate the taping. A strategy that works well is for mentors to set up the camera early in the year and leave it in the classroom so students become used to having it around. Then, when the camera is discretely turned on, students will not digress into camera-happy behavior.

If a mentor's goal is to gather evidence about a mentee's verbal interactions, the mentor can use an audiotape as an alternate and less obtrusive method to videotaping. Setting up a tape recorder in a discreet location and taping a lesson provides mentees with additional evidence without the anxiety of viewing themselves. Whether using an audio- or videotape, mentors should watch or listen to the recording with their mentees to provide alternative viewpoints if mentees only focus on the negative aspects of his or her work. The mentor's perspective provides valuable balance when reviewing the hard evidence provided by audio- and videotape.

Portfolio

Beginning teachers need to take ownership for gathering their own evidence regarding their growth as teachers. The use of a portfolio to document lesson plans, creative units, and classroom management plans can be a very helpful way for beginning teachers to organize this evidence. In addition, reflective documents in a portfolio provide evidence about a mentee's ability to problem solve and reflect on what he or she has learned. A notebook or electronic portfolio gives novice teachers a place to keep track of their work and save it for later reference and support for their work. Mentors should encourage mentees to keep a portfolio and offer to review it and provide feedback about the contents and organization of the materials. This portfolio might be used as a part of an evaluation conference or a future job search, so mentees should be strongly encouraged to develop one that meets their needs.

Mentors might suggest that mentees keep sample lesson plans that demonstrate the range of their pedagogical skills as well as any notes from teachers and parents, unit plans, and other curriculum materials they developed for inclusion in the portfolio. A description of their classroom management plans and their goals for continued professional development also might be a part of the portfolio. Observation reports might be included as evidence of the mentee's willingness to receive and act upon feedback concerning his or her teaching. In addition, the mentee's reflections, written after lessons or after conversations with the mentor, can be included as evidence of his or her ability to problem solve and monitor and adjust teaching practices.

The portfolio is a record of the growth and development of the mentee. As a partner in the novice teacher's ongoing learning, mentors can use the portfolio as evidence of the efforts the mentee has made to continue to develop his or her teaching skills. Discussing what the mentee selects for inclusion in the portfolio also can serve as a means to identify goals for the mentee as well as to highlight strengths. In any case, a collection of lessons, management plans, and other documents that demonstrate progress in the mentee's efforts toward improvement provide a holistic view of the mentee's work. The richness, or lack thereof, of the selections and reflections included in the portfolio are clear evidence of teacher growth.

Mentors can use these tools, in addition to the other techniques discussed in this chapter, to help mentees learn more about their teaching and learning interactions, and thus learn how to further improve upon their skills.

Chapter 6

Evaluation

Due to the nature of the educational system, novice teachers are sometimes thrust into teaching with little training. New teachers are often given the most difficult classes as well as additional duties, such as coaching assignments or bus duty. They are frequently left in isolated classrooms to fend for themselves, leaving them feeling alone, frustrated, and bereft of support. The combination of faculty members' busy schedules and novice teachers' feelings of fear regarding sharing their needs often results in beginning teachers' concerns going unnoticed. Thus, the responsibility of providing support to new teachers is often left up to a few interested or identified individuals.

However, beginning teachers fare best when the whole school community is committed to the ongoing growth and development of novice teachers. In order for the teaching profession to flourish and continue to provide appropriate and effective learning opportunities for students, new teachers must be supported. While mentoring programs often provide specific means by which to support novice teachers, some educators suggest that experienced teachers must be careful not to limit other, more informal, mentoring opportunities. Delgado states, "Whether through chance meetings in hallways or scheduled discussions during planning periods, as experienced teachers we must all do all we can to

stop the feelings of failure that new teachers inevitably experience" (1999, p. 29). Identified mentors may provide the main support for beginning teachers, but it is up to the village elders of a school community to contribute to aiding and supporting novice teachers.

Individual teachers or groups of teachers who have decided to work with novice teachers understand that they must prepare for their work as mentors. Mentors also must reflect on their work and have the opportunity to dialogue with others in similar positions to expand their knowledge and effectiveness. Although mentors may be taking part in activities related to being an effective mentor, they may still wonder to what degree they are affecting their mentees' growth. This is a hard thing to measure, but certain techniques and tools can be employed to help mentors appraise their effectiveness.

Program Evaluation

Evaluating mentoring programs and the work of individual mentors is helpful in determining if sufficient support is being provided to novice teachers. It is important to ascertain if mentors are competent and comfortable with their role, and if mentees are receiving the support they need to be successful. Positive results are reflected in the retention rate of new teachers, and by the degree to which supervisors/administrators feel comfortable with the work of beginning teachers. However, this measure of effectiveness is very broad and does not identify other factors that may impact the success of the novice. Therefore, a formal evaluation that seeks information regarding the beginning teacher's increased effectiveness and the perceived impact of the mentor in the novice's learning is very helpful. Evaluation supports mentoring programs by identifying areas of strength and areas where the process could be improved.

As discussed in earlier chapters, although evaluations can be beneficial, it is strongly recommended that mentors are not required to evaluate their mentees. If this happens, mentees become concerned that their requests for help or problems with a lesson will be documented in an evaluation rather than being used as a starting point for ongoing learning, and this impacts and limits the effectiveness of a mentoring program.

However, in some mentoring programs mentors take on the role of evaluator by offering an assessment. Done in the right way, this can be successful. For example, the California Formative Assessment and Support System for Teachers (CFASST) is a program that includes an assessment given by mentors, although the assessment by the support provider (i.e.,

mentor) is a formative assessment. This particular model provides opportunities for beginning teachers and their support providers to "engage in structured assessment tasks over a two-year period" (Olebe, Jackson, and Danielson 1999, p. 42). This type of structured assessment may be a viable option for providing assessment in a mentoring program as it allows both mentor and mentee to engage in pre-defined tasks that clearly outline their roles and responsibilities. This example recognizes that it is possible to design an assessment program that includes assessment by the mentor, but the assessment needs to be carefully structured and incorporate formative evaluation. In the CFASST model, the purpose of the assessment is not for formal teacher evaluation. Rather, a common set of scales or "descriptions of practice" based on Charlotte Danielson's work are used to describe teaching practice at different levels (Obele, Jackson, and Danielson 1999).

The success of a beginning teacher can reflect the success of a mentoring program; therefore, it might be tempting to simply evaluate beginning teachers and determine that if they were successful, the program was also successful. However, this does not help to improve programs. To examine the effectiveness of a mentoring program, mentees need to be asked what the process did for them. The impact of the mentoring may be beyond the scope of what is seen in the classroom during an observation, and may be much more comprehensive than the data compiled through the use of a rating scale.

No matter if the mentee received informal mentoring or was involved in an organized program, the effectiveness of the mentoring is best identified by those directly impacted by the program. An evaluation that asks open-ended questions to gather information about the mentee's perceptions of the mentoring program offers the most complete view.

The use of a questionnaire, such as the example shown in Figure 6.1, provides quantitative evidence as to the impact of the program, and provides suggestions for increasing the program's effectiveness. It is best if someone besides the mentor—such as the building principal or staff development director—administers the evaluation. In any case, mentees should be encouraged to be honest with their feedback.

An evaluation tool such as this mentor evaluation form identifies the mentee's perceptions of the mentoring. It is also important that a mentorship director, if there is one, gathers information from the others involved in the mentoring relationship—the supervisors and the mentors—to get a three-dimensional look at the program.

The evaluation form shown in Figure 6.2 can be filled out by mentors to provide themselves and mentor program directors with some feedback and evaluation regarding their role in the mentoring process.

Mentee Evaluation

Consider the support you received from your mentor this year in answering the following questions.

1. During the past year, what did your mentor do that was most beneficial for you?

2. During the past year, what did your mentor do that was the least beneficial for you?

3. List specific *areas* of your teaching where your mentor provided support.

4. List several *ways* in which your mentor provided the support you listed in question 3.

5. In what other ways did your mentor meet your needs during the first year?

6. Were you given sufficient time to work with your mentor? How could your time together be improved?

7. What would you like to see added to the mentoring program for next year's first-year teachers?

Figure 6.1

Mentor Evaluation

1. What do you think was the most valuable aspect of mentoring for your mentee?

2. What was the most valuable aspect of mentoring for you?

3. What aspect(s) of mentoring did you find most difficult?

4. List the specific areas/topics that you worked on with your mentee.

5. Did you have sufficient time to work with your mentee? How could your time together be improved?

6. What would you like to see added to the mentoring of next year's first-year teachers?

7. What kinds of support and/or training would you like to see provided to new mentors beyond what you were given?

8. List any additional information that you think would be helpful for future mentors to be aware of as they work with mentees.

Figure 6.2

SkyLight Professional Development

The evaluation form shown in Figure 6.3 can be given to supervisors by mentors, directors of mentoring programs, or other district administrators. As the third party of the mentoring relationship, supervisors can offer an unbiased view of the mentoring process.

Once this information has been gathered from all three sources, mentors or the director of the mentoring program should categorize the data and note patterns. This data should make clear what worked and what needs to be refined in the mentoring interaction. If specific information is needed to shape a particular program, questions related to this information can be added to the survey. For example, if a mentoring program matched mentors and mentees based on certain criteria, then both the mentor and mentee need to be asked if they felt this match was effective and helpful. If a program does not specifically match mentors and mentees, then a question pertaining to matching is not helpful. On the other hand, if a program is considering matching mentors and mentees, a question that directs mentees and mentors to consider if they would like to work with someone with a similar philosophy or personality is appropriate.

Supervisors have an additional tool that can help to identify the effectiveness of mentoring. Evaluators/supervisors usually formally observe beginning teachers early in the year. Supervisors can then compare this observation with one conducted later in the school year. They should note improvements and compare this data with the surveys completed by mentees and mentors. If an area that was addressed through mentoring by the mentor and mentee is also an area that the supervisor noted improvement between the first formal observation and the second, some of that growth can be attributed to the mentoring process.

If the growth and development of novice teachers is the ultimate goal of the mentoring process, supervisors should look closely at the overall effectiveness of the novice teachers. If beginning teachers end their first year in the classroom with stronger skills and methods for effectively supporting student learning, then the goal was met. Identifying how much of the novice's effectiveness can be attributed to mentoring is not an exact science. However, by conducting surveys and looking at a mentee's growth over time, supervisors can identify some of the mentoring program's impact. This comparison should in no way compromise the confidentiality of the mentoring relationship, but rather should serve as another way to view the effectiveness of the program.

Supervisor Evaluation

1. What do you think was the most valuable aspect of mentoring for the mentee you evaluated?

2. As a supervisor, what was the most valuable aspect of mentoring for you?

3. Did you see improvement on the part of the novice teacher that you attribute to mentoring? If so, list the areas of improvement.

4. What aspect of mentoring do you feel was the most valuable for the *mentee*? Why?

5. What aspect of mentoring do you feel was the most valuable for the *mentor*? Why?

6. What resources did you provide to the mentor to support his or her work? (List monetary resources, time, materials, training, etc.) Would you change that for next year?

7. Any other comments, concerns, or questions?

Figure 6.3

Evaluation for Personal Growth

As mentors work to develop their own abilities to interact effectively with novice teachers, it is helpful for them to identify areas for their own personal growth. Mentors might want feedback on their use of questioning or verbal skills. Asking another mentor to observe a mentoring interaction and provide them with feedback is one way mentors can identify areas of strength as well as areas where more development is needed. While this may seem like an awkward situation, a partner mentor is valuable because he or she can provide feedback from a similar perspective. Someone who has never been a mentor will not share the same vantage point. This type of observation should only be conducted after the mentor and mentee have firmly established their relationship, so that the additional observer will not bother the mentee.

In addition to outside observation by another mentor, informal surveys of mentees also can be used to identify areas where mentors might want to focus their own development. Because of the personal nature of these surveys, it is helpful if another individual, such as the supervisor or the director of the mentoring program, gathers this data anonymously so that mentees can be assured that their comments will not impact their relationship with their mentors. For example, a supervisor could issue the survey to the mentee and then provide feedback to the mentor in a general format. This type of feedback works best in programs where a mentor works with several mentees to provide a greater level of anonymity for the mentee. In one-on-one mentoring programs, it is difficult for this data to be gathered anonymously. Regardless of the program, this data should be gathered at the end of the first year of mentoring, so mentors can focus on the identified skills the following year. In addition, mentees who are providing suggestions or comments may be more honest if they are not in the middle of the mentoring relationship.

The following feedback form (see Figure 6.4) is an example of a form that can be given to mentees by a supervisor to discern areas on which mentors might want to focus their growth.

Another way for individual mentors to determine their own growth level is to look at the difference between their knowledge base before and after taking part in some form of a mentor preparation program. For example, mentors can complete a survey of their skills and knowledge base prior to reading this text and taking part in the dialoguing exercises. After completing the book, mentors can take the survey again to measure growth. While self-reporting is not completely accurate, the pre- and post-test questionnaire (see Figures 6.5 and 6.6) gives mentors, or those

continued on page 128

Mentoring Feedback Form

(to be completed by the mentee)

Name of mentor: _____

Communication Skills
Please rank your mentor's ability to clearly articulate his or her ideas and suggestions to you.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

misunderstandings occurred often — easily understood, specific, clear language

Questioning Skills
Please rank your mentor's ability to ask questions that enable you to think critically about your teaching.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

few questions; tells me what to do — questions make me think about why/how I make a decision

Knowledge/Resources
Please rank your mentor's ability to provide you with ideas and resources.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

few ideas or suggestions when I ask — multiple resources and suggestions when I need them

Support
Please rank your mentor's ability to provide you with support, both academic and nonacademic.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

little support — meets all my needs

Please list any additional information regarding this mentor's work that you think would be helpful to him or her as he or she continues to develop his or her mentoring skills.

Figure 6.4

SkyLight Professional Development

Mentor Teacher Questionnaire 1

(Complete *prior* to reading *Mentoring Novice Teachers: Fostering a Dialogue Process.*) Please indicate on the chart your current level of knowledge and/or skill. (A "1" rating indicates little or no expertise and a "5" represents significant ability or knowledge.)

	(low)				(high)
1. Understanding of the roles of the mentor teacher, mentee, and supervisor.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Understanding of the needs of the beginning teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Communication skills: trust building	1	2	3	4	5
verbal skills	1	2	3	4	5
nonverbal skills	1	2	3	4	5
4. Conferencing skills: use of guiding questions	1	2	3	4	5
listening skills	1	2	3	4	5
5. Data gathering during observations: scripting	1	2	3	4	5
other techniques (please list):					
_____	1	2	3	4	5
_____	1	2	3	4	5
_____	1	2	3	4	5
_____	1	2	3	4	5
_____	1	2	3	4	5
6. Use of model (lens) while observing (e.g., PATHWISE, Framework, etc.) Name of lens: _____	1	2	3	4	5
7. Use of action plan and goal setting to focus learning	1	2	3	4	5

Figure 6.5

SkyLight Professional Development

Mentor Teacher Questionnaire 2

(Complete after reading *Mentoring Novice Teachers: Fostering a Dialogue Process.*)
Please indicate on the chart your current level of knowledge and/or skill. (A "1" rating indicates little or no expertise and a "5" represents significant ability or knowledge.)

	(low)				(high)
1. Understanding of the roles of the mentor teacher, mentee, and supervisor.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Understanding of the needs of the beginning teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Communication skills:					
trust building	1	2	3	4	5
verbal skills	1	2	3	4	5
nonverbal skills	1	2	3	4	5
4. Conferencing skills: use of guiding questions	1	2	3	4	5
listening skills	1	2	3	4	5
5. Data gathering during observations: scripting	1	2	3	4	5
other techniques (please list):					
_____	1	2	3	4	5
_____	1	2	3	4	5
_____	1	2	3	4	5
_____	1	2	3	4	5
_____	1	2	3	4	5
6. Use of model (lens) while observing (e.g., Pathwise, Framework, etc.) Name of lens: _____	1	2	3	4	5
7. Use of action plan and goal setting to focus learning	1	2	3	4	5

Figure 6.6

continued from page 124

facilitating a mentoring preparation program, a means of determining if mentors awareness level increased on the part of mentors after reading and participating in the ideas presented in this text. These questionnaires can provide mentors with the information they need to enhance the growth and development of their mentoring skills.

Letters of Recommendation

New teachers, eager to add to their portfolio or placement file, may ask their mentors to write them letters of recommendation. This request should not be construed as a signal that the mentee is looking for a new job. Rather, the letter can be a significant means of support when, and if, the novice teacher seeks a new position. A letter of recommendation is *not* an evaluation. Rather, it is a description of the mentee's work and development during the year, and who better to describe that growth than someone who has been a part of the learning experience? When writing a letter of recommendation, mentors need to consider their use of language (put in written form) as they communicate about the mentee's skills. As administrators often use letters of recommendation to help them decide who will be asked to a job interview, the wording in this document needs to be carefully crafted.

Letters of recommendation from mentors carry significant weight in the eyes of educational leaders. Teachers and administrators involved in the hiring process want to hear what another teacher—one who worked closely with the novice educator—has to say. Teachers and administrators look to the letter from the mentor for an honest description of a potential faculty member's teaching ability. If mentees do not request such a letter for their files, mentors might suggest to their mentees that such letters might be useful in providing potential employers with additional information about the mentee's professional development.

However, mentors need to consider that writing a letter of recommendation often veers into the realm of evaluation. Mentors are being asked to recommend their mentees for a potential job, and thus the words used need to be carefully chosen. This does not mean mentors need to hold a degree in English to produce an effective letter of recommendation, but mentors should keep a few suggestions in mind when writing a letter of recommendation. A letter of recommendation should:

- Signal the level of a mentor's support and identify the mentee's one main strength in the opening statement. The rest of the letter

should provide evidence that supports this strength. For example, "Thomas has been my mentee for the past year, and I have been so impressed by his ability to engage his seventh-grade history students in higher-level thinking."

- Identify the mentor's position (relative to the mentee) and the grade and/or content the mentee teaches in the first few sentences. (See previous example.)
- Provide subcategories of the mentee's strengths that support the opening ideas. These can form the basis for the paragraphs within the letter. The key areas, domains, or components of the observational lens should be used as the focus for each supporting paragraph, so that the mentor does not inadvertently send a red flag by omitting any mention of important areas, such as classroom management. For example, "Thomas uses student-centered strategies, his assessments are always appropriate, and his energy and enthusiasm make the learning fun for his students." (Following this sentence should be one paragraph describing Thomas's student-centered strategies, one outlining his assessments, and one defining his energy level and enthusiasm. This information forms the body of the letter.)
- Provide evidence and specific examples to support all statements. The mentor needs to avoid statements that might be ambiguous or misleading. For example, "Students were divided into learning groups and given a choice of options for their projects." (This statement supports the student-centered strategies section in the example above.)
- Include a statement about classroom management for the beginning teacher. This can be incorporated into comments on any of the subcategories, or it can be included in a section by itself. (This topic is a key area of interest for those hiring new teachers.) For example, "Using games and role playing as assessment techniques can create management issues, but Thomas structured these activities to keep the focus on learning."
- Use positive, supportive language, but identify areas for growth, so the letter is believable. (Some suggest that written letters of recommendation need to include the candidates' weaknesses. Wording these as areas where the novice teacher has worked to improve acknowledges that these areas are a challenge, but also points out that the mentee has made an effort to address these concerns.) For example, "While some beginning teachers give up when active learning gets a bit out of hand, Thomas worked to de-

velop greater levels of structure so his students were able to meet the predetermined objectives."

- Appear professional. The mentor should use district stationary and include his or her title with his or her signature. The mentor should also carefully proofread the letter.
- Include anything that the mentee specifically wants to have included in the letter. The mentor may also allow the mentee to view the letter. (The letter will probably be placed into the mentee's portfolio or placement file, and the mentee has access to these.)
- Close with a statement that qualifies the mentor's recommendation. For example, "I highly recommend Thomas for any position in the area of social studies." (*Highly* is the qualifier in this statement.)
- Be succinct—one page, two at the most. Most administrators may be pressed for time and appreciate a letter that is direct and to-the-point.
- Include a phone number and indicate that the mentor is available to provide more in-depth comments.
- Be copied by the mentor in case the mentor is called by a future employer and he or she needs to refresh his or her memory about what he or she wrote!

There may be times when a mentor has reservations about the mentee and are unsure of how to write a letter that honestly conveys these concerns without eliminating the novice from all possible job opportunities. In this situation, mentors can incorporate some red flags into their letter so that administrators can read between the lines and make their own judgments about the candidate. It is important that mentors not write anything that is unsubstantiated or may be considered a defamation of character. Mentors need to keep in mind that novice teachers who really struggle in their first teaching experience can work through issues and develop into competent, effective educators. However, it is equally important that mentors convey concerns—especially those in areas that might not be easily remedied. The suggestions below can help mentors determine appropriate ways to incorporate these concerns into their letters of recommendation. A letter of recommendation may

- Omit a key area. For example, not mentioning classroom management could be a red flag.
- Describe an area in which a mentee has made progress. For example, "Thomas has steadily improved in his ability to connect his objective to the lesson."

- Indicate the need for ongoing learning and improvement (when this is beyond the norm for most beginners). For example, "With continued support and effort, Thomas will undoubtedly increase his ability to effectively evaluate student learning" or "With strong support from a district mentoring program, Thomas can continue his growth as an educator."
- Describe activities in which the mentee has participated, but include no descriptors. For example, "Thomas taught several sections of seventh-grade history, writing lesson plans and conducting the class activities for several weeks." (No further mention of these activities is included).
- Omit a statement of recommendation.
- Refrain from qualifying a statement of recommendation. For example, "I recommend Thomas to any district looking for a competent beginning teacher."
- Include a statement that indicates the mentor is willing to talk further about a specific concern. For example, "If you would like more details about Thomas's work with diverse learners, please give me a call."

Sample Letters of Recommendation

The following (see Figures 6.7–6.9) are some examples of real letters that have been written for beginning teachers, both at the student teaching and first-year level. While these letters do not propose to address all of the suggestions presented above, they are representative of letters that have been written with those criteria in mind.

Sample Letter 1

To Whom It May Concern:

It is indeed a rare pleasure to write this letter of recommendation for _____, who is completing his first year of teaching seventh-grade science as my mentee at Central Middle School.

In nearly forty years I have had the pleasure of working with many outstanding beginning teachers. None better than _____. Since he appeared in my doorway this fall, it's been a joy to watch him with students, and to experience his competence and enthusiasm.

First impressions are always critical. _____'s is impeccable. Always well prepared, he is a powerful role model for students every day. His deeply personal approach demands their attention, and his wealth of relevant examples immerses the students in problems they care about.

His ability to communicate with students at both ends of the ability spectrum is uncommon. Whether he is helping an advanced section of earth science students or students at risk, his skills are remarkable. His students more than respect him. They love him! And they love what they are becoming because of his strong positive influence in their lives.

_____ is also an inspirational coach with all the maturity and perspective that such a position requires.

Having said all of this, you will be delighted to know that no matter how good it gets . . . _____ is ALWAYS looking to do it BETTER! I have never worked with anyone so willing to listen, to study, to research, to reflect, to invest so many of his resources and so much of his time to become a better teacher.

If you are fortunate enough to hire _____, your faculty and students will have a rendezvous with excellence!

Sincerely,

Figure 6.7

Sample Letter 2

To Whom It May Concern:

I have served this past year as a mentor to _____ during her first year teaching third grade at Village Elementary. _____ has focused her learning this year on classroom management, and has come a long way. Students now know what to expect from _____'s classroom.

_____ has experimented with many instructional models and has become especially proficient at direct instruction. Students are on task and have many opportunities to work independently to hone their skills. _____ uses creative activities to get the students' attention and provides step-by-step guidance as students acquire new information.

Throughout this year, _____ has worked hard to facilitate her student's learning. Her willingness to take my suggestions and implement them into her lessons has been impressive. I know she has the potential to develop into a competent teacher.

If you would like to call me to discuss _____'s teaching skills, please do not hesitate. You may reach me at _____.

Sincerely,

Figure 6.8

SkyLight Professional Development

Sample Letter 3

To Whom It May Concern:

The Algebra II classes conducted by ___during her student teaching at Wilson High School clearly reflected her commitment to student-centered teaching and learning. As her college supervisor, I had the opportunity to observe ___ as she worked to hone her skills during this 14-week experience. _____'s strong knowledge base, her skill in planning lessons that engage students in their learning, and her ability to create an atmosphere in her classroom where math is relevant and fun identifies her as an outstanding beginning teacher.

____'s knowledge of her subject area was apparent in her explanations to students in both Algebra II and her Functions, Statistics, and Trigonometry classes. When asked questions by students, she would not only provide answers that clarified the issue, but she also invited the students into the discussion of the problem with statements such as, "Do you interpret that as . . .? "Here's the way I see it . . . , what do you think?" She placed students in work groups to share their understanding as they worked on problems that used information learned in class. ____'s ability to facilitate learning through her interaction with all the groups was the key to the success of this approach. In addition to the teaching of Algebra II and FST, ___ also tutored a struggling student in geometry, a demonstration of ___'s breadth of knowledge in mathematics.

____'s lessons are carefully planned and she uses her students' prior knowledge as a stepping stone upon which to build successive learning experiences. Her specific objectives go beyond the text to include the development of group interaction skills and the ability to problem solve. To accomplish these objectives, ____ instituted a brain teaser of the day for students to work on as she began class and took attendance. These brain teasers stretched the students' thinking and provided an opportunity for them to apply mathematical logic to solve problems that often did not involve numbers.

____ often asked students to describe their work, at the board or to their teammates, to facilitate their ability to communicate mathematically. Her careful attention to detail and use of a variety of resources, both print and technology, assist her in her teaching.

The greatest gift that ___ brings to her students is her willingness to create a classroom where math makes sense to students and where the joy of mathematics is celebrated. ____ often provided brief mathematical biographies to give a human face to the development of math concepts. The learning teams in her classes were all named for famous mathematicians, and ___ intentionally balanced the names of well-known male mathematicians with more current female individuals to provide role models for all of her students.

Figure 6.9

SkyLight Professional Development

___ worked to connect math concepts with the real world. Her students shot baskets one day to study the arc of the path of the ball into the basket. Students used their heights to physically create a bell curve and had to develop real life models to support statistical algorithms. Watching a group of students shout out, "I love FST!" (Functions, Statistics, and Trigonometry) when they had the correct answer to a problem on a unit review in ____'s class was a perfect example of a joyful learning experience.

All of this student-centered learning required ____ to be very clear and specific about her expectations for student behavior. ___ met this challenge by developing clear guidelines and rules for learning activities and by strengthening her communication style to provide a stronger presence in the classroom.

There are few beginning teachers who reflect as carefully on their teaching and work to compensate for lessons that need additional time or a different approach to support student learning than ___. The school district who adds ____ to their staff will not only be gaining a competent teacher of mathematics, but a teacher who focuses on engaging students in their learning. In addition, her ability to work effectively with her cooperating teacher and other colleagues identifies her as a strong asset to any school district. I highly recommend her!

Sincerely,

Figure 6.9 (continued)

Dialogue: Letters of Recommendation

After reading the examples in Figures 6.7–6.9, identify the components included that reflect the previous suggestions on pages 128–131. Then discuss the effect you think each letter might have on a potential employer with another mentor. If you are working alone, write down the effects you think these letters might have.

These letters demonstrate how recommendation letters can be crafted to indicate areas the mentee has mastered, as well as red flags for areas that need future growth.

Although these letters often serve as the official culminating duties of a mentor as the mentoring relationship draws to a close at the end of the school year, it is important that experienced educators continue to provide

support for novice teachers in informal and casual settings. A mentor who simply takes the time to inquire how their former mentee is doing or how things are going is providing ongoing support. When a teacher feels supported, he or she becomes a more effective teacher, and therefore, students become better learners.

Appendix A

Mentoring Projects

While mentors are reading and discussing the ideas in this book, they may want to translate their thinking into action. The following is a brief list of projects that may be helpful for mentors to work on while developing their mentoring skills. The completion of these projects should result in a useful tool or resource for mentors and mentees to use during their work together. However, if these projects do not provide new support for mentoring in a mentor's school and/or district, they should not be undertaken.

Project: Everything You Ever Needed to Know to Begin Teaching in This School

Process

In a packet or notebook, mentors can gather together all of the relevant information that they believe a new teacher in their building should know. Mentors can go beyond the administrative documents to include traditions, processes, ways to get things done, and helpful tips. Because this is an overwhelming amount of information, it might be helpful for mentors to provide a quick tips or frequently asked questions format to help new teachers wade through this information to find what they need. The development of a web page for new teachers, that also could be available for parents or other community members, also might be a helpful format for sharing this information.

Ideas

All or some of the following ideas could be included in a mentor's packet or on the mentoring Web page.

- All pertinent information (handbook information) about the school/district (e.g., forms, discipline policy and procedures, etc.)

- A letter of welcome to the mentee from the mentor outlining the mentoring program and/or his or her expectations for the experience
- The mentor's plan for developing a relationship with his or her mentee (e.g., having lunch, meeting for coffee, etc.)
- A plan or timeline for introducing mentees to the facilities and other faculty and administration
- A plan or schedule for creating a system of peer support for the mentee (explaining how mentors plan to get the mentee together with other student teachers or first-year teachers)
- Scheduled times for conferences, meetings, and observations (to allow for a gradual induction for student teachers; to provide time for trust-building for both first-year and student teachers) or a plan to set up convenient meeting times
- A list of the mentor's prep times, extracurricular duties, and responsibilities (as well as dates of conferences, team meetings, curriculum committee meetings, athletic meets, etc., that could or should be attended)
- A format or schedule for videotaping one of the mentee's lessons
- A format and details of lesson plans that reflect the lens that will be used during observation, if the lens is predetermined by the school or district
- District curricula, scope and sequence, units, and/or other grade level course expectations
- Sample lesson plan ideas for the mentee to try
- Ideas and opportunities for team teaching
- A format for student teachers for accommodating all the college's requests (e.g., forms, due dates, evaluations, etc.)
- A format for first-year teachers for addressing any expectations of the program (e.g., scheduled workshops, meetings, etc.)
- Ideas for facilitating good communication during the mentoring experience

Project: Action Plan

Using the action plan format provided in Chapter 3 (see Figure 3.7), mentors can develop a plan to enhance their own knowledge in an area that would help them provide support to a novice teacher. Mentors can share their completed action plans with buddy mentors to reflect on how the

plan is progressing. Some ideas for the plan might include:

- Gathering information on best practices in the mentor's content area
- Practicing communication skills with another mentor
- Reading articles or a book on mentoring
- Setting up a schedule for mini-conversations at lunch or prep time with another mentor to talk through issues—and following through on these conversations

Project: Sharing Your Expertise

Mentors can create a plan for sharing their expertise with other potential mentor teachers in their building (e.g., present an inservice presentation, duplicate project ideas, coordinate a cooperating teacher/student teacher gathering). Mentors can present this plan to their administration or staff development office for consideration.

Project: Reflections

Mentors can keep journals of their thoughts as they work through this text or as they develop their mentoring skills. They can continue writing in their journal as they work with their mentees. Mentors can use their journal as springboards for conversations with their mentees, for ideas for action research, or for sharing stories and experiences. Mentors should include any insights, personal growth, or added awareness that they develop during their work as a mentor. Mentors should specifically identify how they plan to use their journals in their work with their mentees.

Appendix B

Role-Plays

Mentors can extend their learning—especially in the area of communication—by practicing their verbal skills. The following scenarios provide problematic situations that mentors might experience. Mentors can role-play these situations with another mentor and try to think on their feet using effective communication. If possible, mentor pairs should have a third mentor serve as observer to note the responses that they give. Those taking part in the role-play can debrief about how the mentor communicated and consider what else the mentor might have said to create a positive ending to the scenario.

Mentors should assume that the mentor and mentee in each role-play are meeting for a conference, and use the scenario descriptions as their mental scripts to direct how they begin their conversations. Those who are role-playing the mentee should try to be as realistic as possible. They need to use their imaginations to create dialogue that would be typical for a beginner in each particular situation. In addition, role-play groups should discuss what created the situations and what mentors can do proactively to prevent the problem.

Scenario 1: Part A

You are a mentor. You met and briefly observed a mentee two weeks ago. There were indications that the mentee has some difficulty with appropriate use of the English language (usually shown by the frequent use of inappropriate grammar) and he or she seemed to lack clarity regarding expectations for students.

Scenario 1: Part B

You are a new teacher (a mentee). You have been teaching for three weeks. Things seem to be going well except for the difficulty of knowing how much to plan. Part of what you are concerned about is knowing or anticipating how long activities will last. You do not remember the mentor's first name.

Scenario 2: Part A

You are a new teacher (a mentee). You are having some significant discipline problems in your classes. It seems like weeks since the mentor has offered assistance. This upsets you.

Scenario 2: Part B

You are a new mentor. You have not checked in on your new mentee as much as others have because she seems to want independence and she seemed competent in preceding discussions. You must be at an inservice that you are facilitating in 40 minutes. The drive is minimally 30 minutes. You also have to use the restroom very badly.

Scenario 3: Part A

You are a mentor. You are waiting for a mentee's prep period to begin. You are reviewing notes concerning the progress of the mentee on goals that he or she set for trying some new assessment techniques.

Scenario 3: Part B

You are a veteran teacher. You have noticed that the mentee who teaches next door to you has deviated from the testing procedures to which you and another colleague have become accustomed. Also, there seems to be a lot of noise in the mentee's room during project time (whatever that is). You feel you must tell this new teacher's mentor about these troublesome activities for the good of the students.

Scenario 4: Part A

You are a new teacher (a mentee). You are experiencing some personal problems (finances, car troubles, loneliness) that are making it difficult to be happy in your new job and new community. You have not shared this with others, but hope to seek the advice of your mentor.

Scenario 4: Part B

You are a mentor. You observed your mentee last week. Prior to the observation it was decided that you would watch the questioning techniques of your mentee. In the observation you noted the following:

- The mentee called on the boys much more frequently than the girls, despite a 50-50 split in gender distribution.
- The mentee tended to name the student to answer the question prior to asking the question.
- The wait time seemed great—5 seconds or longer was given to students on the hard thought questions—much more than was given on the factual questions.

Scenarios developed by Mike Miller, Professor of Education at Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota, and Marc Boehlke, formerly of the Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning. Used with permission.

References

Bey, T. 1992. Mentoring in teacher education: Diversifying support for teachers. In *Mentoring: Contemporary principals and issues*, edited by T. Bey and C. Holmes. Reston, VA: Association of Teacher Educators.

Britzman, D. 1991. *Practice makes practice: A critical study of learning to teach*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Brooks, V., Sikes, P., and Husbands, C. 1997. *The good mentor guide: Initial teacher education in secondary schools*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.

Brown, J. 1995. *Observing dimensions of learning in classrooms and schools*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Burke, R. 1970. Methods of resolving superior–subordinate conflict: The constructive use of subordinate differences and disagreements. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance* 5: 393–411.

Caine, G., and Caine, R. N. 1997a. *Education on the edge of possibility*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

———. 1997b. *Unleashing the power of perceptual change*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Canning, C. 1991. What teachers say about reflection. *Educational Leadership* 48(6): 19. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Carlson, J., and Thorpe, C. 1984. *The growing teacher: How to become the teacher you've always wanted to be*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Daloz, L. 1986. *Effective teaching and mentoring: Realizing the transformational power of adult learning experiences*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Danielson, C. 1996. *Enhancing professional practice: A framework for teaching*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Delgado, M. 1999. Developing competent practitioners. *Educational Leadership* 56 (8): 45–48.

Educational Testing Service. 1995. *Teacher performance assessments: A comparative view*. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.

Enz, B. 1992. Guidelines for selecting mentors and creating an environment for mentoring. In *Mentoring: Contemporary principals and issues*, edited by T. Bey and C. Holmes. Reston, VA: Association of Teacher Educators.

Funk, F., Long, B., Keithley, A., and Hoffman, J. 1982. The cooperating teacher as most significant other: A competent humanist. *Action in Teacher Education* 4 (2): 57–64.

Furlong, J., and Maynard, T. 1995. *Mentoring student teachers: The growth of professional knowledge*. New York: Routledge.

Ganser, T. 1996. What do mentors say about mentoring? *Journal of Staff Development* 17(3): 62–69.

Glickman, C. 1988. Supervision and the rhetoric of empowerment: Silence or collision? *Action in Teacher Education* 10(1): 11–15.

———. 1990. *Supervision of instruction: A developmental approach*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Gold, Y. 1992. Psychological support for mentors and beginning teachers: A critical dimension. In *Mentoring: Contemporary principals and issues*, edited by T. Bey and C. Holmes. Reston, VA: Association of Teacher Educators.

Gosnell, J. 1977. The relationship between work experience and occupational aspirations and attrition from teaching. *The Clearinghouse* 51: 176–179.

Graham, P. 1998. *A dialogue for collaborative learning.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Hamilton, C., with Parker, C. 1990. *Communicating for results.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Hartnell-Young, E., and Morriss, M. 1999. *Digital professional portfolios for change.* Arlington Heights, IL: SkyLight Training and Publishing.

Head, F., Reiman, A., and Theis-Sprinthall, L. 1992. The reality of mentoring: Complexity in its process and function. In *Mentoring: Contemporary principals and issues*, edited by T. Bey and C. Holmes. Reston, VA: Association of Teacher Educators.

Huling-Austin, L. 1990. Mentoring is squishy business. In *Mentoring: Developing successful new teachers*, edited by T. Bey and C. Holmes. Reston, VA: Association of Teacher Educators.

Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium. 1992. *Model standards for beginning teacher licensing and development: A resource for state dialogue.* Washington, DC: The Council of Chief State Officers.

Johnson, D. 1993. *Reaching out.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Johnson, D., and Johnson, F. 1991. *Joining together.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Jourard, S. 1971. *The transparent self.* New York: D. Van Nostrand Co.

Kay, R. 1989. Evaluation of beginning teacher assistance programs. In *Assisting the beginning teacher*, edited by L. Huling-Austin, S. Odell, P. Ishler, R. Kay, R. Edelfelt. Reston, VA: Association of Teacher Educators.

———. 1990. A definition for developing self-reliance. In *Mentoring: Developing successful new teachers*, edited by T. Bey and C. Holmes. Reston, VA: Association of Teacher Educators.

———. 1992. Mentor-management: Emphasizing the HUMAN in managing human resources. In *Mentoring: Contemporary principals and issues*, edited by T. Bey and C. Holmes. Reston, VA: Association of Teacher Educators.

Latham, A., Gitomer, D., and Ziomek, R. 1999. What the tests tell us about new teachers. *Educational Leadership* 56(8): 23–26.

Lieberman, A., and Miller, L. 1984. *Teachers, their world and their work.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Little, J. 1990. The mentor phenomenon. In *Review of Research in Education*, edited by C. B. Cazden, 16: 97–351. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.

Lucas, C. 1999. Lifesaving 101: How a veteran teacher can help a beginner. *Educational Leadership* 56(8): 27–29.

Lyman, L., Morehead, M., and Foyle, H. 1994. Improving supervision of student teachers. Workshop presented at the annual meeting of the Association of Teacher Educators, Atlanta, GA.

Maldevez, A., and Bodoczky, C. 1999. *Mentor courses: A resource book for trainer-trainers.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Marzano, R., Pickering, D., Arredondo, D., Blackburn, G., Brandt, R., Moffett, C. 1992. *Dimensions of learning teacher's manual.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Marshall, H. 1990. Metaphor as an instructional tool in encouraging student teacher reflection. *Theory into Practice* 29(2): 128–132.

McDaniels, J. W., et al. 1971. Openness: Personalized expression in interpersonal communication. Paper presented at the annual conference of the International Communication Association, Phoenix, AZ., as cited in *Social intercourse: From greeting to goodbye*, by Mark L. Knapp. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Moir, E., and Stobbe, C. 1995. Professional growth for new teachers: Support and assessment through collegial partnerships. *Teacher Education Quarterly* 22(4): 83–91.

Neal, J. 1992. Mentoring: A teacher development activity that avoids formal evaluation of the protégé. In *Mentoring: Contemporary principals and issues*, edited by T. Bey and C. Holmes. Reston, VA: Association of Teacher Educators.

Newman, J. 1989. *Finding our own way: Teachers exploring their assumptions*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Odell, S. 1992. Evaluating Mentoring Programs. In *Mentoring: Contemporary principals and issues*, edited by T. Bey and C. Holmes. Reston, VA: Association of Teacher Educators.

Olebe, M., Jackson, A., and Danielson, C. 1999. Investing in beginning teachers—The California model. *Educational Leadership* 56(8): 41–44.

O'Shea, L., Hoover, N., and Carroll, R. 1988. Effective intern conferencing. *Journal of Teacher Education* 39(2): 17–21.

Pitton, D. 1994. Mentoring: The special needs of student teachers. *People and Education* 2(3): 338–352.

———. 1998. *Stories of student teaching: A case approach to the student teaching experience*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice-Hall.

Portner, J. 1998. *Mentoring new teachers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Reilly, J., and Adams, C. 1992. *Mentorship: The essential guide for schools and business*. Scottsdale, AZ: Gifted Psychology Press.

Reiman, A., and Edefelt, R. 1990. *School-based mentoring programs: Untangling the tensions between theory and practice* (Research report 90–7). Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Department of Curriculum and Instruction.

Reiman, A., Head, F., and Theis-Sprinthall, L. 1992. Collaboration and mentoring. In *Mentoring: Contemporary principals and issues*, edited by T. Bey and C. Holmes. Reston, VA: Association of Teacher Educators.

Reiman, A., McNair, V., McGee, N., and Hines, J. 1988. Linking staff development and teacher induction. *Journal of Staff Development* 9(4): 52–58.

Rosenfeld, L. B. 1979. Self-disclosure avoidance: Why I am afraid to tell you who I am. *Communication Monographs* 46: 72–73

Ross, J., and Regan, E. 1993. Sharing professional experience: Its impact on professional development. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 9(1): 91–106.

Russell, T. 1993. Reflection-in-action and the development of professional expertise. *Teacher Education Quarterly* 20(1): 51–62.

Samovar, L., Porter, R., and Jain, N. 1981. *Understanding intercultural communication*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Schon, D. 1990. *Educating the reflective practitioner*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Schubert, W., and Ayers, W. 1992. *Teacher lore: Learning from our own experience*. New York: Longman.

Schwebel, A., et. al. 1992. *The student teacher's handbook*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Shea, G. 1998. *Mentoring: How to develop successful mentor behaviors*. Menlo Park, CA: Crisp Publishing.

Shulman, J., and Colbert, J. (Eds.) 1988. *The intern teacher casebook*. San Francisco: Far West Laboratory for Education Research.

Tannehill, D. 1989. Student teaching: A view from the other side. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education* 8: 243–253.

Theis-Sprinthall, L. 1987. Experienced teachers: Agents for revitalization and renewal as mentors and teacher educators. *Journal of Teacher Education* 169(1): 65–79.

Theis-Sprinthall, L., and Reiman, A. 1997. *Mentoring and supervision for teacher development*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Trager, G. 1958. Paralanguage: A first approximation. *Studies in Linguistics* 13: 1–12.

U.S. Department of Education National Center for Educational Statistics. 1999. Unpublished tabulations for the 1993–1994 Schools and Staffing Summary and the 1994–1995 Teacher Follow-up Survey.

Varah, L., Theune, W., and Parker, L. 1986. Beginning teachers: Sink or swim? *Journal of Teacher Education* 37(1): 30–34.

Wasley, P. 1999. Teaching worth celebrating. *Educational Leadership* 56(8): 8–11.

Weaver, R. 1987. *Understanding interpersonal communication*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman.

Wentz, P., and Yarling, J. 1994. *Student teaching casebook for supervising teachers and teaching interns*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice-Hall.

Wildman, T., and Borko, H. 1985. *Beginning teacher's handbook*. Blacksburg, VA: Virginia Polytechnic, College of Education.

Withall, J., and Wood, F. 1979. Taking the threat out of classroom observation and feedback. *Journal of Teacher Education* 30(1): 55–58.

Wolfe, D. 1992. Designing training and selecting incentives for mentor programs. In *Mentoring: Contemporary principals and issues*, edited by T. Bey and C. Holmes. Reston, VA: Association of Teacher Educators.

Wong, H., and Wong, R. 1998. *The first days of school: How to be an effective teacher*. Harry K. Wong, publisher.

Zahorik, J. 1986. Acquiring teaching skills. *Journal of Teacher Education* 37(2): 21–24.

Web Sites for Mentors

National Board for Professional Standards: http://www.nbpts.org/
Includes information about National Board certification

Teachers Helping Teachers: http://www.pacificnet.net/~mandel/
Homepage for teachers by teachers

TeacherNet: The Student Teacher Resource page http://www.csulb.edu/~jmcasey/
A technological way to connect with other teachers to share ideas

Teacher Talk: http://education.indiana.edu/cas/tt/tthmpg.html
For preservice secondary education teachers

Northwest Regional Laboratory: http://www.nwrel.org/
Homepage devoted to curricula and lesson plans

Index

Action plan, 50–54, 59, 138–39
Administrative supervisor
  evaluation by, 122, 123
  expectations for, 20
  mentorship role of, 14–15, 64
Advocate, role of mentor as, 14
Analysis of the lenses, 84
Anecdotal record, 98, 99, 100
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), 79
Audiotaping, 114
Auditory evidence, as data-gathering technique, 104–6

Borko, H., 3

Caine, G., 3
Caine, R. N., 3
California Formative Assessment and Support System for Teachers (CFASST), 118–19
Canning, C., 49
Classroom
  focusing on the whole, 39, 41–44
  mirroring a, 42–43
College supervisors
  expectations for, 20
  mentorship role of, 14–15, 64
Communication
  empathy through, 55
  gender as factor in, 34
  honesty in, 37
  nonverbal messages in, 30–35
  open, in mentoring relationship, 25–35
  verbal messages in, 26–30
Conferencing cycle, 85–89, 92–93
  observation, 87–88
  post-observation conference, 88–89, 91, 92–93, 96–97, 99
  pre-observation conference, 85–87, 90, 99
Confidence, conveying, 31
Content knowledge, organizing, for student learning, 72
Conversation feedback, 48–49
Council of Chief State School Officers, 79

Danielson, Charlotte., 74, 119
Data-gathering techniques and tools, 95–115
  anecdotal record, 98, 99, 100
  audiotaping, 114
  focused scripting, 99, 101, 102–4
  freewriting, 98–99, 101
  numeric data, 112–14
  portfolio, 115
  proximity analysis, 106–9
  scripting, 96–98
  verbal flow, 109–11
  videotaping, 114
  visual/auditory evidence, 104–6
Debriefing
  after observations, 96
  after role plays, 46
Delgado, M., 117
Dialogue opportunities
  action plan, 53
  guiding questions, 49
  letters of recommendation, 135
  mentoring roles, 16
  metaphor for teaching, 6
  nonverbal communication, 31, 32
  numeric data, 113
  observation, 43
  observational cycle, 89
  pre-conference questions, 86–87
  proximity analysis, 108
  remembering experiences, 10–11
  scripting, 106
  verbal flow, 110
  working through an impasse, 64–65
Dimensions of learning model, 79, 81–83
  developing and using productive habits of mind, 83
  helping students acquire and integrate knowledge, 81
  helping students extend and refine knowledge, 82

Dimensions of learning model *(continued)*
meaningful use of knowledge, 82
student development of positive attitudes, 81
Direct language, 50

Emotional support, 58
providing, 57–58
Empathy, need for, 55–56, 58
Enhancing Professional Practice, a Framework for Teaching (Danielson), 74
Environment, creating, for student learning, 72
Evaluation, 117–36
mentee, 120
mentor, 121
for personal growth, 124, 128
program, 118–19, 122
supervisor, 123
Experiences, remembering, 10–11
Expertise, sharing, 139
Eye contact, in nonverbal messages, 34

Feedback conversation, 48–49
Focused scripting
as data-gathering technique, 99, 101
INTASC standards for, 102–4
Framework for teaching model, 74–78, 85
classroom environment, 76
instruction, 77
planning and preparation, 75
professional responsibilities, 78
Freewriting, 98–99, 101
Funk, F., 3

Gender, as factor in communication, 34
Gold, Y., 2, 3
Ground rules in open communication, 25, 28–29
Guided questions, 40–41, 44, 46, 47, 49–50, 70, 97

Habits of mind, developing and using productive, 83
Hamilton, C., 26
Head, F, 38
Hoffman, J., 3
Honesty
as basis for open communication, 25
need for, 31, 59–60, 64–67

Impasses, working through, 64–65
Intercultural communication, 33
Interpersonal distance, 33
Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support consortium (INTASC) standards, 79, 80, 99
Intervention, need for outside, 60, 64, 65

Jackson, A., 119
Jain, N., 33
Johnson, D., 51
Johnson, F., 51

Jourard, Sidney, 22
Journals, 139

Keithley, A., 3
Knowledge
helping students acquire and integrate, 81
helping students extend and refine, 82
meaningful use of, 82

Language. *See also* Verbal messages
direct, 51
exactness of, in communication, 29
nonjudmental, 59
Lead-in statements, 28
Learning, observations in organizing, 69–93
classroom environment in, 76
conferencing cycle in, 85–89, 92–93
developing positive attitudes and perceptions, 81
dimensions of learning model, 79–85
instruction in, 77
INTASC model in, 79, 80, 99
PATHWISE model in, 71–74
planning and preparation in, 75
professional responsibilities in, 78
Letters of recommendation, 67, 128–36
desire for positive, 38
incorporating reservations into, 130–31
Lifelong learner, 12
Listening, 55
in nonverbal messages, 34
Long, B., 3
Long-range goal planning, 60, 61–62, 63

McDaniels, J. W., 22
Mentees. *See also* Novice teachers
addressing the needs of, 37–67
action plan and resources in, 50–53
empathy, 55–56, 58
guided questions, 44, 46, 49–50
honesty, 59–60, 64–67
personal support, 55–56, 58
in the whole classroom, 41–44
creation of long-range goal plan for, 60, 61–62, 63
evaluation of, 120
expectations for, 17
letters of recommendation for, 38, 67, 128–31
as lifelong learners, 12–13
mentorship role of, 11–13
need of, for empathy and personal support, 55–58
Mentoring
benefits of, 2
defining relationships in, 5–20
feedback form for, 125
open communications in, 25–35
roles in, 16
trust in, 21–24
Mentoring program evaluation, 118–19, 122

Mentoring projects, 137–39
Mentors
  as advocate, 13
  collaboration between, 10
  creating a long-range goal plan for mentees, 60, 61–62, 63
  defined, 1–2
  evaluation of, 121, 124–28
  expectations for, 18–19
  goal of, 13
  letters of recommendation from, 38, 67, 128–36
  mentorship role of, 13–14
  need for, 2–3
  observations of, 43–44
  organizing teaching and learning through observations of, 69–93
  personal vision of teaching for, 5–7, 9
  professional growth of, 2
  recalling experiences as novice teachers, 10–11
  as role model, 13
  as supporter, 13
  use of support statements in providing emotional support, 58
Mentorship roles, 9–15
  of the administrative supervisor, 14–15, 64
  of the college supervisor, 14–15
  flexibility of, 15–16
  of the mentee, 11–13
  of the mentor, 13–14
  prioritization checklists for, 15–19
Messages
  nonverbal, 30–35
  verbal, 26–30
Metaphor, developing, for teaching, 6, 7, 8, 9, 22–23
Mirroring, 42–44
Misinterpretation, avoiding, 28, 29–30
Moir, E., 55

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), 79
Needs, addressing mentees', 37–67
Nonjudmental language, 59
Nonverbal messages, 30–35
  eye contact in, 34
  gender in, 33
  listening in, 34
  proximity in, 34
  time in, 34–35
  turn-taking in, 34
Novice teachers. *See also* Mentees
  and building trust, 21–24
  diverse needs of, 41
  expanding vision of, 40
  letters of recommendation for, 38, 67, 128–31
  mentor observation of, 95–96
  need for mentors, 2
  need of, for honesty, 59–60, 64–67
Novice teachers *(continued)*
  needs of, 66
  open communication with mentor, 25–35
  providing support for, 117–18
  recalling experiences as, 10–11
  stress of, 13
  success of, 3
Numeric data, 112–14

Observation, 43, 45, 87–88, 105
  and guided questions, 47, 49–50
Observational cycle, 89, 95–96
Olebe, M., 119
Open communication
  ground rules for, 25, 28–29
  in trust building, 25–35
Outside intervention, need for, 60, 64, 65

Paralanguage, 30
Parker, C., 26
PATHWISE model, 71–74
  creating environment for student learning, 72
  organizing content knowledge for student learning, 72
  teacher professionalism, 73
  teaching for student learning, 73
Personal growth, evaluation for, 124, 128
Personal support, need for, 55–56, 58
Porter, R., 33
Portfolios, 115
Post-observation conference, 88–89, 91, 92–93, 96–97, 99
PRAXIS model, 71, 74
Preface statements, 24
Pre-observation conference, 85–87, 90, 99
Prioritization checklists for mentorship roles, 15–19
Professionalism, teacher, 73
Projects, mentoring, 137–39
Proximity analysis, 106–9
Proximity in nonverbal messages, 34

Questions
  guided, 40–41, 44, 46, 47, 49–50, 97
  pre-conference, 86–87
  reflective, 47, 50, 97

Reciprocal learning, benefit of, 67
Reciprocal sharing in building trust, 22
Reflective journal, 139
Reflective questions, 50, 97
Reflective thinking, 97
Reiman, L., 38
Reservations, incorporating, into letters of recommendation, 130–31
Resources, need for, 50–53
Role model, role of mentor as, 14

Role plays, 140–42
  debriefing after, 46
  feedback conversation in, 48–49
  focusing on verbal message in, 26–27
  mirroring a classroom in, 42–43
  observation and guided questions in, 47
  in providing emotional support, 57–58
  trust building in, 23–24
Rosenfeld, Lawrence, 22

Samovar, L., 33
Scripting, 96–98, 99, 101
  anecdotal record as form of, 98, 99, 100
  focused, 99, 101, 102–4
  formats for, 106
  INTASC standards in, 102–4
Self, focusing on the, 39
Self-disclosure in building trust, 22, 24
Stobbe, C., 55
Student learning
  creating environment for, 72
  organizing content knowledge for, 72
  teaching for, 73
Students, focusing on the individual, 39
Student teachers, 1
  and need for interaction with mentors, 66
  needs of, 38, 66, 67
  stress for, 13
Supervisors. *See* Administrative supervisors; College supervisors
Supporter, role of mentor as, 14
Supportive learning, benefits of, 65–66
Support statements and questions, for responding to emotions, 58

Tannehill, D., 9, 33
Teacher professionalism, 73
Teaching
  developing metaphor for, 6, 7, 8, 9, 22–23
  framework for, 74–78
  observations in organizing classroom environment in, 76
Teaching *(continued)*
  conferencing cycle in, 85–89, 92–93
  dimensions of learning model in, 79–85
  instruction in, 77
  INTASC model in, 79, 80, 99
  PATHWISE model in, 71–74
  planning and preparation in, 75
  professional responsibilities in, 78
  personal vision of, 5–7, 9
  for student learning, 73
  team, 66
Team teaching, 66
Theis-Sprinthall, L., 9, 38
Time
  commitment in mentoring, 22
  in nonverbal messages, 34–35
Tone, matching to verbal messages, 30, 31, 32
Tools, data-gathering, 95–115
Trager, George, 30
Trust building, 21–24
  initial disclosure in, 23–24
  role of open communication in, 25–35
Turn-taking in nonverbal messages, 34

Verbal flow, 109–11
Verbal messages, 26–30
  exact language in, 29
  focusing on, 26–27
  matching tone to, 30, 31, 32
Videotaping
  as data-gathering technique, 114
  in mirroring classroom, 42–43
  of nonverbal communication, 31, 32
Vision, expanding for beginning teachers, 40
Visual evidence, 104–6

Weaver, R., 22
Web pages, development of, for new teachers, 137–38
Wildman, T., 3
Wolfe, D., 2
Word choice, focusing on, in verbal communication, 27–28

There are

one-story intellects,

two-story intellects, and

three-story intellects with skylights.

All fact collectors, who have no aim beyond their facts, are

one-story minds.

Two-story minds

compare, reason, generalize,

using the labors of the fact collectors

as well as their own.

Three-story minds

idealize, imagine, predict—their best illumination comes from above,

through the skylight.

—Oliver Wendell Holmes

SkyLight

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We Prepare Your Teachers Today for the Classrooms of Tomorrow

Learn from Our Books and from Our Authors!

Ignite Learning in Your School or District.

SkyLight's team of classroom-experienced consultants can help you foster systemic change for increased student achievement.

Professional development is a process not an event. SkyLight's experienced practitioners drive the creation of our on-site professional development programs, graduate courses, research-based publications, interactive video courses, teacher-friendly training materials, and online resources—call SkyLight Professional Development today.

SkyLight specializes in three professional development areas.

Specialty #1

Best Practices

We **model** the best practices that result in improved student performance and guided applications.

Specialty #2

Making the Innovations Last

We help set up **support** systems that make innovations part of everyday practice in the long-term systemic improvement of your school or district.

Specialty #3

How to Assess the Results

We prepare your school leaders to encourage and **assess** teacher growth, **measure** student achievement, and **evaluate** program success.

Contact the SkyLight team and begin a process toward long-term results.

SkyLight Professional Development

2626 S. Clearbrook Dr., Arlington Heights, IL 60005
800-348-4474 • 847-290-6600 • FAX 847-290-6609
info@skylightedu.com • www.skylightedu.com

MENTORING NOVICE TEACHERS

Can you remember your first day of teaching—the excitement, the nervousness, the anxiety, the confusion, and especially the people who helped you make it through that first day and the many that followed? Mentors are invaluable to a beginning teacher. They give support, guidance, and knowledge. This book provides educators who mentor novice teachers an opportunity to increase their awareness of the skills that are needed to mentor. Through the use of specific examples and role-plays, readers can learn how to work effectively with an inexperienced teacher. Both the mentor and mentee benefit from the strategies and practical ideas in this book. The mentor develops ways to interact positively with the novice teacher, and the beginning teacher is supported as he or she moves through initial teaching experiences.

DEBRA ECKERMAN PITTON, PH.D.

Debra is an associate professor of education at Gustavus Adolphus College. She also serves as a mentor for student teachers and every year conducts workshops for mentor teacher training. As an experienced educator and author, Debra has also written *Stories of Student Teaching: A Case Approach to the Student Teaching Experience* and previously served as the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Learning, District 197 in West St. Paul, MN.

SkyLight

800-348-4474 • 847-290-6600
Fax 847-290-6609
info@skylightedu.com
http://www.skylightedu.com

ISBN 1-57517-270-4
90000
9 781575 172705